

CONTACT 6 THE CRIMINAL MAN

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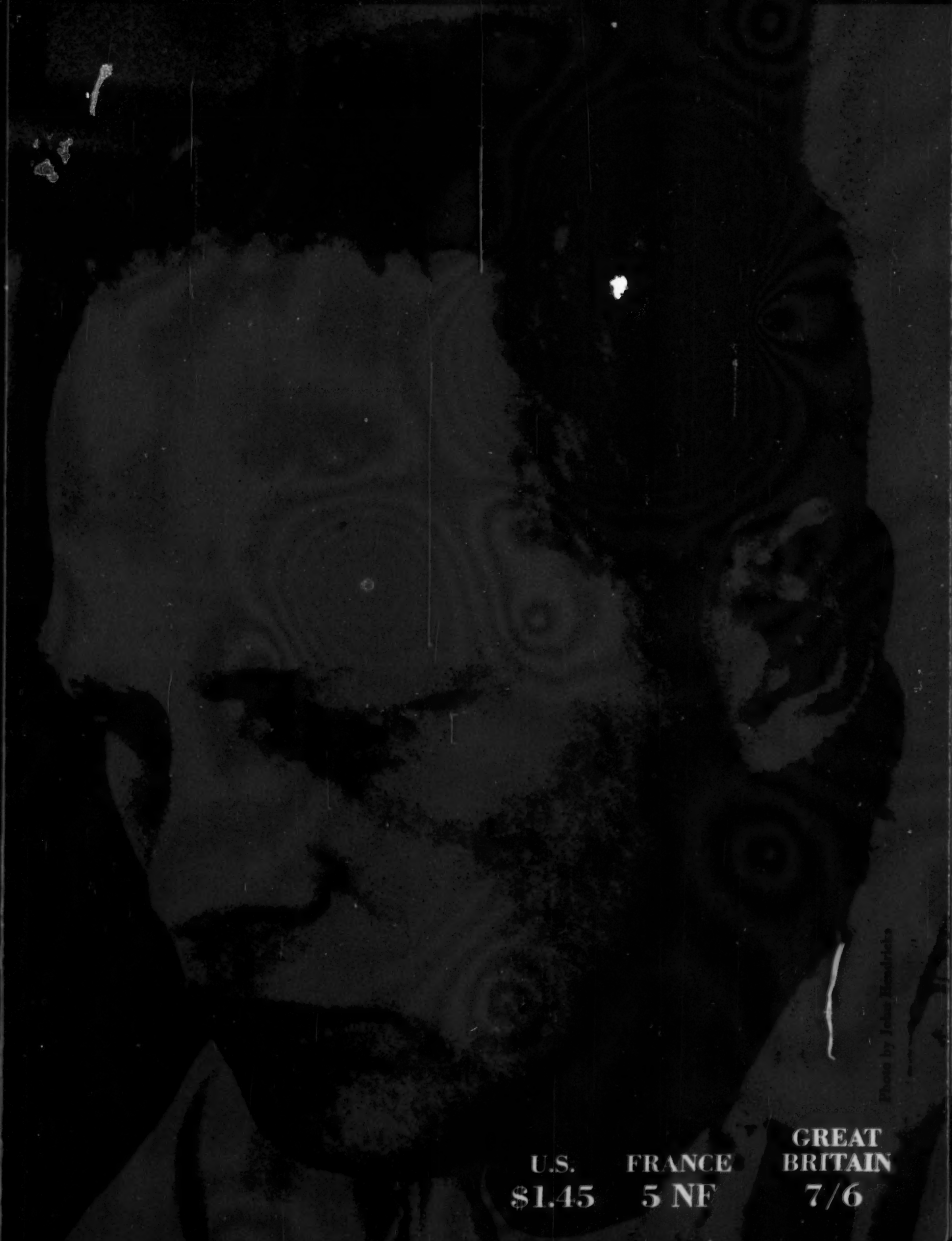
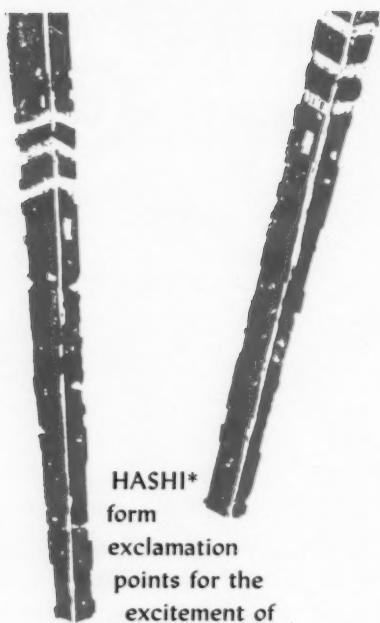


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—Pascal, *Pensées*

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CONTACT, Vol. 2, No. 6, Oct., 1960, is published quarterly by Angel Island Publications, Bridgeway and Johnson, Box 755, Sausalito, California.

Domestic and Foreign Subscriptions, \$5.00 a year, \$9.00 for two years. All payments from foreign countries must be made by U.S. money orders or checks made payable in U.S. currency or with \$0.75 added for collection charges. Single copy: U.S. \$1.45; France 5 NF; Britain 7/6.

Distributed Nationally by: California Magazines, Inc., Los Angeles; Cosmo Distributors, Hillside, New Jersey; Baker & Taylor Co., Hillside, New Jersey; A. & A. Distributors, Boston, Massachusetts. Represented Internationally in all foreign countries except Canada by Henry M. Snyder & Company, Inc., New York. Distributed in England by H. Jonas & Company, London.

Unsolicited manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope.

Printed in the United States of America.

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With the exception of CONTACT 1, the editors have never actually directed an issue. The issue directs us. That is, of the material made available to us, there are those pieces that *demand* publication. What appears when these various pieces come together is often quite different from what we had expected. As life itself is unpredictable, so is CONTACT. We don't know whether you will be pleased with what emerges as *The Criminal Man*, but we feel sure you're in for some surprises.

For a while it seemed that such an issue as this might prove disastrous—manuscripts we anticipated somehow failed to arrive, letters went unanswered, correspondents sent regrets. And, after all, what is *The Criminal Man*? Is he a particular sort of bird?—or is he Everyman?

But then, as it happened before, the issue began directing us. In the mailbox one day was a plump, grey-wrapped manuscript, unsolicited. "Sweetheart, Virgin and God," it was titled, "by Edward Pomerantz." An ambitious title, to be sure. Written, we learned, by a young New Yorker who has received a Theater Guild award and a J. Walter Thompson fellowship for playwriting. SVG is a story not to be summarized or described—read it and see what we mean. Whether or not it's all too human theme belongs in *The Criminal Man* is something each reader must decide for himself.

Next came a manuscript that had been solicited, but wasn't at all what we had expected. Are there, despite our national insistence to the contrary, political prisoners in the United States? You don't think there are? Read "The Non-Existent Man" by Alvah Bessie. Is the name vaguely familiar? In case you've forgotten, Mr. Bessie was one of The Hollywood Ten. Read him. Then try answering

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those questions again.

The Criminal Man had begun to assume form and substance. What were his various features?

From Chicago came a ruthless story by Paul Herr: "Good Luck to the New York Yankees." We hadn't planned on anything like this, but here it is.

From Paris came the cartoon history of "Fernand, le Flic," scalpel and ink drawings by Roger Barr.

From New York again, from Thomas Gallagher, author of *The Gathering Darkness*, came a sickening thing called "On Seeing a Man Put to Death." You won't start with Gallagher, not with a title like that, not with a subject like that, but you'll get to it eventually. You won't ever forget it.

Is there poetry in *The Criminal Man*? Tom McAfee, Phillip Levine, and James Schevill believe there is. Homer Anderson knows there is; he is a convict, and winner of the 1960 Robert Lindner Foundation Award for prison arts.

Then Jack Cope, whom we are allowed to describe as "an inmate of a federal penitentiary," submitted "The Dry Time." Cope knows of what he writes—bank robbery, and drought in the midwest. This is his first published story.

Meanwhile, two portfolios of graphics were shaping up. The first was "Art of the Imprisoned," the results of the editors' visits to state prisons. The second, our photographic section, was suggested by three lines from Daniel Bell's essay, "Crime as an American Way of Life."

At the last moment came an angry essay from one of America's most distinguished and exciting writers, Nelson Algren. Chicago may not take kindly to his "Mafia of the Heart," but, then, as Algren points out, "Chicago runs from coast to coast."

And that is pretty much it, in 160 odd pages.

It is odd when a magazine presents such an elusive subject in a completely new way; in an artistic way; in a callous way; in a sympathetic way; in a frustratingly human way.

We have learned much by this project. But more than learning, we have been moved. Moved by the material we are publishing here and moved also by some that we couldn't publish—letters, conversations and tours of *our* institutions of punishment.

We hope to move you through contact with our collections of new writing, art and ideas.

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THE EDITORS

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Nelson Algren

THE MAFIA OF THE HEART

At breakfast in the gardened and glasswalled apartment high above the boulevard I envisioned Chicago of the year two thousand, its double-tiered causeways making right-hand turns into skyscrapers fiercely thrusting in a long speared arc; yet our old Indian mists still rose softly between.

My host touched a small silver bell and in came a maid carting prune juice and toast. He earns this juicified service by borrowing money from banks at four percent and loaning it to friends in need at twelve; naturally he derives satisfaction from being of service to others. He is not only keeping money in circulation, but is also keeping prune juice moving instead of just sitting around thinking up ways of beating people out of their money. What he was doing for people and prune juice struck me as so admirable that I marvelled he could be merely self-satisfied where anyone else would get smug. Here he was, a man barely forty, not only with enough prune juice to last if he lives till ninety, but a feeling of satisfaction that what he serves has nary a drop of alcohol to corrupt the mind and heart.

If he is uneasy about toast giving out, he doesn't let his worry appear, but faces the future knowing there is nothing to fear but fear itself. Your business-man is not easily daunted though I seem to recall we once called it usury.

Thank God that terrible era is past and things have worked out well for my friend in the gardened and glasswalled nest above the light-filled boulevard. Beyond being struck staring-blind, mute,



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deaf and half-asphyxiated by boredom he is in good shape physically. There is nothing to disturb his glass-walled hours save a rumor, rising from the streets below, of a useless race who waste their days milling about in union halls and dim-lit cocktail lounges.

A rumor of some muscular party whom cab drivers pay tribute to in preference to getting stuffed into the trunk of a 1956 Chevy. A rumor of a peddler of drugs lying in wait to spring out upon the unwary square, plunge a hypo the size of a sword-cane through his shirtsleeve, thus hooking the poor square onto heroin for life and exit laughing. A rumor too of a girl who bides her hour in a bar lit so dimly that no one can see that the shot-glass in front of her has a false bottom.

As well as a rumor of an executive type with a perfectly workable plan to open a whorehouse on the campus of Valparaiso University, till to his awful shame it was discovered that he wasn't an American citizen.

Of these various menaces my friend is made acutely aware by a local crime commission whose reports have a powerful appeal to anyone who, like myself, has a weakness for fantasy.

Billed as **DRIVING THE BARBARIANS OUT OF OUR MIDST** with a decor straight out of *The Pirates of Penzance*, this municipal attraction has recently been adapted successfully in a network production.

In the original cast a local boy, Virgil Peterson, challenges a mythical Westside Chicago island called "The Mafia", each of whose inhabitants have been costumed as Sicilian brigands, complete with snap-brim hat, scar on left side of mouth, and a dead cigar to chew ferociously. Mr. Peterson, after making certain magical incantations and donning a helmet *affrontée*, thereupon drives the barbarians back to the mountain passes. Should there be survivors, the doorman won't let them upstairs. We are safe for another year.

† In the national production, of course, the leading man was Mr. Kennedy. Unfortunately, the federal investigators, as well as the local fellows, omitted to tell anyone, before choosing up sides, who decided which are the barbarians.

The question is put only as a gentle reminder that it was gents in collapsible stove-pipe lids sporting Anglo-Saxon names and

Victorian manners who syndicated Chicago, as well as Peoria, East St. Louis, Kansas City and points west half a century before Tony Accardo decided to jump ship and pan for gold.

These were the energetic haberdashers who first approved the frontiersmen's saying about the only good Indian being a dead Indian, but waited back east until Indians were scarcer. Then they changed the saying because a dead Indian doesn't buy booze. They didn't come to Chicago or anywhere else to convince posterity that they were founding fathers. Or as Father Damien to the lepers. They came to acquire as much of this world's good as the traffic would bear and still stay out of jail.

Men swift to seize the moment of truth, they got enough goodies to last as long as money stayed in style. In fact, enough spilled over, locally, to build a Civic Opera Building. What did your town get?

Give Tony Accardo the same chance to pay his taxes as Sam Insull had and he'll build you an opera house six stories higher and won't stint on the help either. Most of the early predators were a bit chintzy about paying the help.

It's an old observation that the pitchman is the first to buy his own pitch and your prune-juicified usurer is the last to concede that there is corruption in Chicago. Though the grease is coming out of his ears, your business-man stands firm for justice, chastity, and square-dealing. He can come through the shadiest deal in town, skirmish with a traffic cop till he finds the man can make even change, and arrive home satisfied that It Isn't If You Won Or Lost, But How You Played The Game.

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Then, contentedly at rest before the evening video, he watches the cold courage of narcotics officers setting a trap for a drug peddler by marking the serial numbers of bills. Trapped at last, the dastard is dragged off hissing, spitting and raving like a kuke to prison; apparently for scraping more than his share off a heroin cap. I'm sure he never saw the marked bills because those go to the district captain to pay off on his ranch-house. What I'm never able to figure is why scraping a percentage off a loan of money holds the glow of a highly moral act while scraping an equivalent percent off a heroin cap to keep from getting sick in the street is put down as an immoral one. They must be saving that one for phone-vision.

The peddler at least has the justification that, unless he steals as he's told, he's going to get busted. What the loan-shark's excuse is I simply don't know. I know he didn't invent heroin. But then neither did the peddler.

Nor have I yet heard of a procurer employing another procurer. The fact is that this latter trade exists almost exclusively for the man who won't let the word "pimp" be spoken in his home.

The laborer is worthy of his hire, and the procurer gives more than guidance. What he sells the wayfaring profligate is more than a young, beautiful girl. He sells reassurance too. This wandering exurbanite wants a lot for his money. He wants a girl who won't rob him, who won't infect him, who won't involve him, who won't be raided while entertaining him, who won't knock him out with chloral hydrate, who will be widely experienced and yet look like a high-school girl, who has good manners and yet is totally depraved. When he leaves her at last he hopes she will remember him forever and at the same time is anxious for her to forget she ever saw him. This is the product the procurer stands back of, and he doesn't do business in the alley. He will be waiting downstairs on the same bar-stool he's been on all night and he'll buy his client a come-back drink to make sure he's created good will.

His client's morality, the procurer may sense, is of the flexible type. The kind that enables him to demand, for decency's sake, that his neighborhood bar ban unescorted women.

The spectacle of an easy girl lightly tripping the unterraced heights of Destruction without a social security card gives him a

weak streak through his middle from his fraternity pin to his wallet, like watching a window washer working without a safety-belt. Life, he desires her sternly to know, is more than paper moons and Tony Bennett singing "One More Dream". With so many men pursuing her little pink hide, he wonders why in God's name the dizzy broad don't settle down and have kids like a normal girl. That her enterprise succeeds from week to week, like his own, is insupportable to him because it constitutes a flat challenge to his whole plant—home, wife, children, church and his devotion to *Time, Inc.*

That devotion has given him a grip on the moral issue here at stake. For if offered a piece of a fast track with the girls well protected, so long as you keep his name out of print, you can be sure he'll take his cut. Honor, like *Time*, he can do without—it's virtue the little kuke is in such heat about.

For it isn't, of course, the girl's morality that is bothering him in the least. It's her economics that is sticking his side.

That is why he wants her pinched.

He's very good at Doublethink, this airborne usurer who seeks out pimps, hires pimps, and gives tips to pimps, yet somehow feels he has no complicity in the making of pimps. Contradictions, paradoxes, no rope of logic is too frail for him to mount boldly hand over hand with nothing to gain above and nothing but air below. "Why should we spend our money educating youngsters so bright they think patriotism is corny?" the president of Batten Barton Durstine & Osborne recently demanded to know, "I'll put my money on a man like Herbert Hoover who never got a single A in college."

Which at least accounts for the straight D that fellow made as President.

"And look at Dwight Eisenhower," BBD & O's man dares us—"Sixty-first in his graduating class!"

If only Ike had lived up to that early promise.

Yet I like the line of thought BBD & O's man is pursuing here. It's just that he doesn't go far enough. Why should we settle in 1960 for a man who never got an A in college or one who was sixty-first in his class? Let's dig right down to the barrel's bottom and elect an Earl Long on a bi-partisan basis.

We are probably the first people who ever knew so much about steel and so little about the Bessemer processes of the heart. We have used our affluence, that ought to make us blessed, for such meager return that it has become a national affliction. We have used it to mount a kind of doublemouthed justice, a public and a private way of doing everything.

One sees this not only in the inability of our best people to realize their complicity in vice, but also in the current howling about the corruption of labor unions. Yet it is precisely the same man who publicly professes his belief in honest unionism, who prefers privately to deal with a rump union because that is the kind that saves management money.

And here is the place, the exact home and first beginnings of our "Mafia", our "syndicate", our "Brotherhood of Evil" or whatever, whether with Kennedy, Kefauver, Tobey or McLellan in the starring role—right in the small syndicated heart of the small businessman who borrows at four and loans at twelve while reciting Kipling's *If*. Not on Chicago's Westside nor on Upper Michigan Boulevard but in the assumption that, once a man has acquired sufficient prune juice for life, his responsibility ends there.

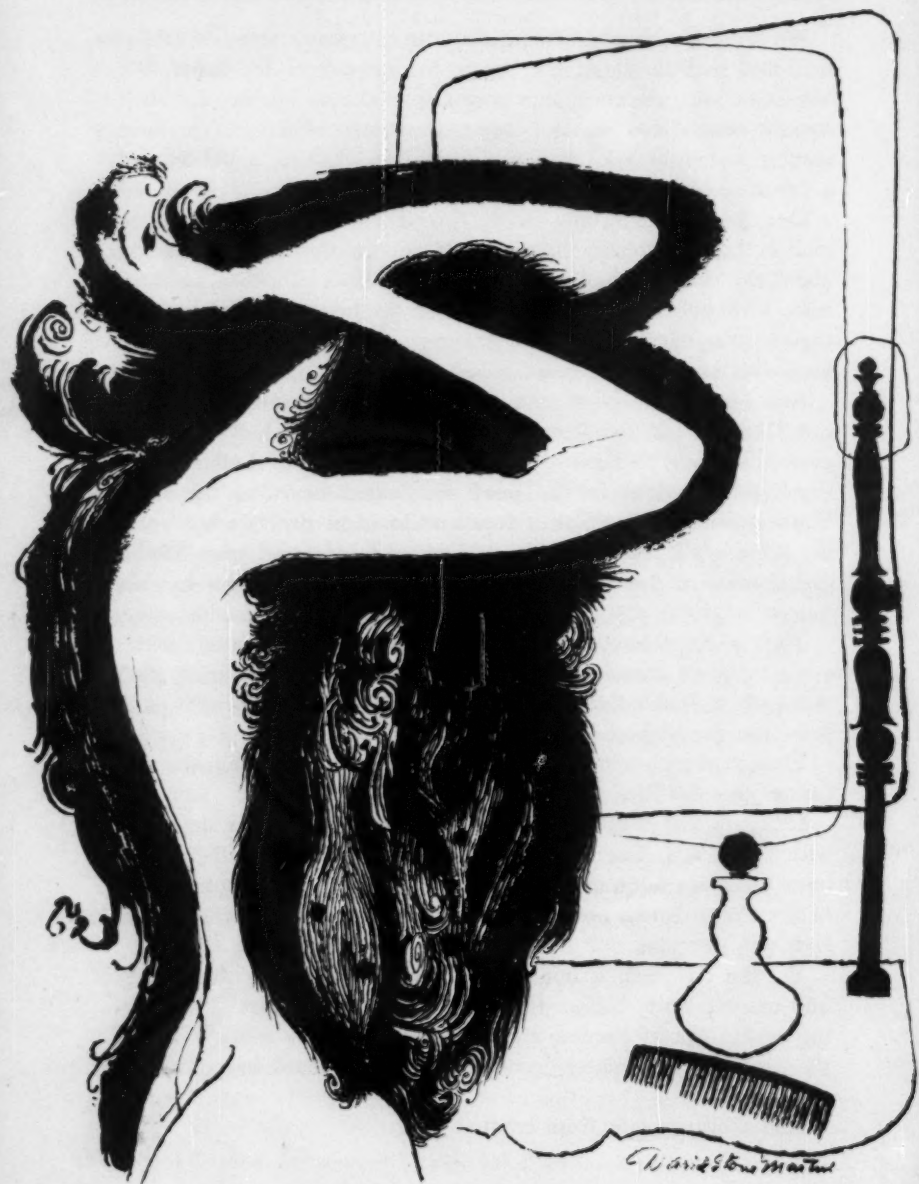
That is why a hundred tents on the open prairie with one man's voice to be its conscience, would be a place more enduring than one with a double-tiered causeway making the longest right-hand turn into the highest skyscraper on the earth of Man.

Though everyone inside is safely glasswalled, content with enough prune juice for life.

Chicago, like that fantastic Russian dog, is a brute that lives with two heads. The upper pup, having been successfully grafted onto the main body of the city, tells the world all about it. Out of the Pump Room and the Chez Paree, it comes yipping at you right off the page.

Yet the city itself is not a yipper. Its heart is that of the dark and massive brute below: for it has a dark, slow heart. Its enduring stories are of human aspiration and it has many stories. In the places of its deepest corruption we have heard its conscience cry out.

And Chicago runs from coast to coast.



*There was One who might have saved
Me from these grave dissolute stones
And parrot eyes. But He is dead . . .*

"Ode," John Peale Bishop

Paul Herr

GOOD LUCK TO THE NEW YORK YANKEES

WITH THE FOREFINGER of his right hand, automatically, Mike Jabez pushed his dark glasses hard against the thin bridge of his nose. The glasses were old and didn't fit properly; whenever he bowed his head, they slid down.

As a part of the same habitual motion, the finger dropped to fondle the sparse edges of his new mustache. Jiggling his right knee up and down in a rapid rhythm, he fed upon the final edition of the *Mirror*, his pale, bulging brow knotted in a customary frown.

The naked 60-watt bulb on the kitchen's ceiling was inadequate for reading, even without dark glasses. Three months before, to quiet Mary's demands, he bought a larger bulb. But the ceiling was very high, Mike short. Even with all New York telephone directories piled precariously on a kitchen chair, standing on tip toe he had only been able to scratch lightly at the bottom of the weak bulb with one fingernail. The custodian told Mary he would bring a stepladder "tomorrow." Of course he didn't. Each day it was to be the next day, then the next.

"How long are you going to put up with this?" Mary wanted to know.

Mike was silent.

"You could at least take off those damned dark glasses. What

do you need them for, in here? Or you could read in the living room, couldn't you? The light's better there."

"Let it go."

"You don't intend to do anything about the light?"

"Let it go."

"Let it go, let it go! Like every other cruddy thing around here, huh?"

"Like every other cruddy thing in the world, yeah."

"Like this square pad's the whole world, huh? The whole wide world?"

"You think not, doll, you just try and cut out and get with another one. OK?"

She slammed the bathroom door; he continued with the *Mirror*. Most of their after dinner exchanges ended on this either-or note; he had come to expect it. She always wanted to rush him out of the kitchen; in his own good time he would go. This he could control.

He could also control the mask he wore each morning. Other people didn't know they were wearing a mask, so they always wore the same one. He didn't have to. He changed his mask with his clothes; he had plenty of both. A mask was a mask was a mask.

He turned a page. The remains of a machine-cooked, machine-frozen, machine-advertised dinner of Luscious Roast of Corn-Fed Pork, Mashed-in-Cream Potatoes, and Giant Fresh-Picked Peas in Pure Butter rested in greasy peace within its compartmented coffin of Gleaming Aluminum Foil. The tiny built-in-the-wall oven, in which the dinner had suffered a high-temperature resurrection, popped occasionally as its thin sides cooled more rapidly than its protective womb of wood and masonry. In the living room (at night the bedroom), a forgotten radio disgorged canned music and commercials. In the bathroom, water cascaded into the tub and Mary coughed.

The *Mirror* was as basic as food; only the extreme, the sensational could assure him that he was right about the world, that it was all phony, a con job from beginning to end. It was all Angle and Pitch, but the squares bought it, every angle, every pitch. There they sat every grey morning on the subway, faces blank as

tiles . . . the squares, the buyers. They didn't even know they were phony. There they sat, their blank unzipped selves hanging out for all to see. One morning he rattled the *Times* at them, pretending to read the financial section. On another, he gave them hard stares through his dark glasses while adjusting the bulge of an imaginary gun under his left arm.

Under the kitchen table, pushed nearly out of sight in the space between the wall's woodwork and the sinking floor, were the shredded traces of three sticks of charge, each of which at its death had measured no more than one hot inch. He did not know about them. Nor did he know that at the bottom of an aluminum container (Sugar) in the pantry was a blue packet of imitation alligator (once it had contained a manicure set) in which were entombed ten caps of H, a match-blackened table-spoon, and a syringe and needle manufactured for the use of veterinarians.

The bathroom door banged open. "Mike, you gonna sit in that kitchen all night?"

He pushed his glasses into place and read:

NAB GUNMAN AFTER WILD BATTLE IN U. S. COURTHOUSE

A man bearing three crude bombs and a revolver opened fire on a federal guard and a secretary in the U. S. Courthouse rotunda today.

In the ensuing gun battle, a score of shots were fired before the man, a recently discharged postal employee, walked out of the washroom to surrender.

"Come on, daddy, I want to clean up in there."

The steamy heat of her body went to his nose. He balanced the scent of pine oil with the black and white of the *Mirror*.

Though the bullets bounced wildly against the walls while dozens of spectators watched, no one was hurt.

The gunman, identified as U. C. Orestes, 33, of 3412 Rock Avenue, wore a crude home-made armor strapped to his chest and back, and carried a briefcase shield stuffed with plywood.

"Please, Mike. Take the paper into the other room and read. OK?"

He glanced at her. One hand on each side of the arch that led from the hall into the kitchen, she made of her body a permissive cross.

In his pocket was a note reading, "There isn't a bit of truth in those people who say I am not important enough to people or anyone or the world. The whole universe knows what I have endeavored to do and accomplish for the world in the face of Hell Bombs and Pernicious Gossip."

In his pocket he carried a small American flag.

"Goddamit, Mike! Get the hell out of here and let me clean up!"

Taking off his glasses, he folded the tabloid on its initial fold, folded it again doubled, and creased it neatly. He slipped his glasses into their leather case. Then, his right hand clutching the *Mirror*, he turned to look at her.

She was still shouting; he didn't listen. He looked at her. Her eyes were narrowed into slits. One hand plucked at the big bath towel about her body. Even after a hot bath her flesh was pale. Her arms and legs were thin, angular. The scent of pine hovered about them.

He got up, came close to her. Her lips continued to writhe: noise. With the *Mirror* he swatted the lips; they stopped writhing: silence. He pushed the silent form aside and walked into the living room.

The sofa was prepared for him, pillows propped in one end for reading. He turned off the radio, sat down and unfolded the *Mirror*. From the kitchen came the rattle of dishes and silverware, then a cautious scrape of metal on metal in the pantry. The bathroom door shut; its lock clicked. Silence. He read:

**BABY BOY
BORN TO
GIRL, 9**

Little Rock, Ark.—(UP)—A 9 year old mother rested quietly today, but her 2½ pound boy struggled for life in an incubator.

The child was born prematurely, officials at the University

of Arkansas Medical Center said.

From the bathroom (the back of the sofa rested against the thin dividing wall) came the sharp hiss of a long breath sucked in over clenched teeth. Silence.

Officials said the child's mother was verified through a Georgia birth certificate to be only 9 years of age. This was the youngest mother to give birth in all the recorded history of the state, officials said.

Doctors said the baby had a good chance to live.

He sampled the other items on the page. Nothing. From the bathroom—the clatter of a metal object fumbled against tile. He turned the page. Ads. From the bathroom—silence.

From the beginning with Mary he had trouble getting it up. It wasn't that he couldn't make it with her; he could eventually. But she had to take over, stimulate him by techniques he considered exotic, appropriate for use only on men well beyond their sexual prime.

With the women before Mary nothing like this had ever been necessary; no hassle. He slipped on a mask the girl liked, and when he saw she liked it well enough—sex. Sex without complications. He called the signals in the game; they came on demand to his apartment. When they got out of line (they always did), he dumped them. No fuss, no muss.

Mary was thirty, a little thin in crucial spots, but still attractive. Her mouth was hungry, sometimes pouting; her eyes, lemur-luminous, spread over him like fox fingers, sensitive to craft and sexuality. She wore simple clothes, knew how to walk gracefully. Her voice had a husky bite, as if she had had to shout over great noise for a long time. She joked about a square father who "cut me off without a cent in my senior year at college." College was square, too, so she didn't mind that. "Like I dig this kook the Dean of Women fingered for a lesbian. Sure I was living in Gloriana's pad. So what? Mother cried and the Old Man flew into a fucking rage, called me a pervert. I cut out." This, she said, was the best thing that had ever happened to her.

As soon as Mike met her he wanted her. Village Party: citizens, uptown tourists . . . cool, square, indeterminate. She was

shacked up with Big Ike. By village standards Ike was an outlaw from his class: with an intuitive and studied grasp of traditional techniques he painted massive oils containing recognizable objects; he bathed and shaved periodically, and broke an occasional bone of those who crossed him. Ike warned Mike to leave Mary alone. Mary echoed the same advice.

"Mike, he's a maniac. Square. Like I dig you, you dig me, you end up in the hospital."

"You buy this situation?"

"I'll cut out. Sometime when he's stoned." She looked at the ceiling while she laughed. "With Ike it's not the lost weekend. Man, with him it's the lost week."

"You . . . you, well, you love him?"

"What?"

He knew the right mask. He showed his money, told about his executive slot in the research department of a TV network. Next day they had lunch. "I can do a lot for you, doll. Plenty of good kicks."

Ike caught them together the next evening. He pushed Mike into a dark, sour-smelling little alley and beat him up. Mary watched. After Ike had stalked away, Mary helped Mike to his feet, wiped the blood from his nose and lips, hailed a taxi. He could not speak; not because of the severity of the beating, but because he had never been beaten thoroughly before. Cradling his head on her shoulder, patting his aching jaw gently, Mary cursed Ike.

In Mike's apartment she made him lie down, then she rushed out. He did not expect her back. He had been defeated; he hadn't even fought, not one blow. He didn't know what to feel when she returned with bandages, an ice pack, and a begging expression in her eyes.

While she patched him up he fondled her breasts. She let him do as he wished without recognition of his fingers. When she had finished with the bandages she asked how he felt. Fine, he said, fine.

"Maybe I better call a doctor."

He shook his head, managed a laugh.

"You sure?"

"Sure."

"OK."

She slipped off her clothes and crawled into bed beside him. He was limp. Whispering that he was in a state of shock because of the beating, she helped him. He did not know what to feel.

It was a performance; when it was over they talked in generalities about the past. She said she was no saint. Saints bored him, he said. She asked for cab fare to go to Ike's and pick up her clothes. He gave her a ten-dollar bill. She said it was too much. He asked if she wanted to move in. She did. He told her to keep the change, watch her step with Ike and be back soon. She kissed him and said yes.

It was a very long hour. You bitch, he wanted to say, what the hell took you so long? Did you lay Ike before you left? But this was not appropriate to the mask he had chosen to wear with her. He offered to help her unpack; she told him to go to sleep; he did.

Near dawn he was awakened by his throbbing jaw. Her face was very near, empty and childish in sleep. The sheet was kicked off, tangled. Her gown was twisted tightly about her waist. With great caution he bent over and in the thin sallow light examined those surfaces on her thighs that in the darkness he had found slightly rough and lumpy to his touch. He saw the etching of her habit. Then he knew what to feel.

After dinner in the apartment that evening she turned on and off the radio, paced about ("I got to get acquainted with the pad, don't I?"), plucked her clothing for imaginary lint, combed her hair with her fingers. She asked for money.

"For what?" he inquired.

"Food, stuff. Lots of things we need you don't have. I got to shop, honey. Like we're playing house now. Dig?"

He consulted his watch. "Stores are closed."

"Not all of them."

"Around here they're all closed."

"OK, I'll get the stuff in the morning when they open. But you lay the bread on me now, hon, so I don't have to wake you up when I cut out."

"Why cut out?"

He led her to the refrigerator, demonstrated that both it and the pantry were filled with food. Now was there a personal maybe feminine item or two she needed, something she just had to cut out for special tonight? Yes, there was. He laughed. Why didn't she say so in the first place? Was she shy? She tried to look the part. He gave her another ten-dollar bill. She kissed him long and hard and rushed out.

He was poised within five inches of the door when she returned. The key he had given her teased the lock. He heard her panting, "Christ, Christ . . ."

As soon as the key was driven home, before it could be turned, he yanked open the door. She was pulled after it inside, stumbling. Her eyes were huge, her face bloodless. What started as an involuntary intake of breath was cut short, reversed, and finished as the choked off whimper of a child awakened by a nightmare.

He snatched her handbag, dumped its contents on the sofa, pounced upon the white envelope, crushed it into his fist and, his mouth shaped for laughter, turned to mock her terror with what he had confiscated.

Rubber fingers dangling at her side, her feet seeking balance, she screamed. Clutching his treasure, he bounded away. She screamed again, fearing more his strained mocking face, his silence, than her loss. Then, instinctively, she chased him around tables, chairs, until at last he whirled to face her, his back touching lightly the draperies of the window fronting the street, the world outside. The thin cloth quivered. At first a kind of gasping, then derisive, and finally high-pitched, hysterical, his laughter when it finally exploded so filled the room that she realized it took such giant wings to get above her screaming.

She clapped both hands, one over the other, to her mouth. Through crushed lips she bit the flesh of her palm. He stopped laughing. She did not see him raise his hand; she was staring through him and the draperies at the street beyond. The blow of this hand (the one without the envelope) put her to the floor.

Leaning over, almost politely he tendered the envelope. "Want this, junkie?"

She reached; he brushed down the hand.

Chuckling softly, he stepped over her body, walked slowly to

the other side of the room, faced her again with his back to the hall door. He offered the envelope.

"You want this, you got to crawl. I mean on your belly, like a snake. You got to crawl *here*." He pointed to his feet. "And you got to smile, like all the happy squares in the ads, doll."

She looked at him, her arms supporting the forepart of her body as if she were attempting push-ups.

"I mean right now. *Move!*"

Her head fell to the floor.

"I guess you don't want the stuff. Maybe I better flush it down the sink." He moved toward the kitchen.

She crawled, her eyes blank, downcast, her lips coiled into a mirthless grin. Expressionless, he observed her tortured progress. At his feet, within touching distance, she tried to get up. He pushed her down.

"No," he said. "It's like this."

One hand caught her chin, raised her face; the other shoved the envelope into her mouth. He stepped back and let her run to the bathroom. Derisive laughter was his only pursuit.

Locking the door with trembling fingers, she turned and let her body sag against it. She opened her mouth to sigh. Only then did she discover that her teeth still held the envelope.

She spit it out. The red of her upper lip scarred one end of it. Her stomach cramped and bubbled. She picked up the envelope and sobbed. Useless, useless! The equipment was in the lining of her bag. God, O god, O god! She turned and stared at the door. Could she do it?

As silently as possible, she unlocked the door and advanced to the sofa. He was stretched out, seemingly asleep. She snatched up her bag. He did not open his eyes. She backed out of the room. With a frantic rush she regained the bathroom and locked the door. Sobbing, she looked about the white, quiet space she owned alone for the moment.

The big part of what the needle shot was privacy. She rode the charge past internal revulsion, chills, fever, false courage to solitude, an endless quiet plain. Breathing deeply with pleasure, like a diver returned from alien depths, she ventured out, hid her equipment in the pantry, and strode confidently into the living

room. A white and quiet place was singing in her blood; *now* was all there was.

So what bugged her about this Mike creep? He was a square in square dark glasses. She giggled.

He looked up, grinned. "You see how it's going to be?"

She clasped her hands behind her back, swung her torso from one side to the other, not moving her feet and, giggling, batted her eyelashes at him. He was a *square* square.

He examined her. "Yeah, you got the point. Now listen." He stood up, rocked back on his heels as he talked. "From now on when you need something like, for example, that *little feminine personal* thing you just got, you ask and I buy it. And I say what to do, and you do it. Dig, doll?"

Letting her neck go limp, she bobbed her head up and down, up and down, up and down, like a puppet with a compulsive operator. He was a square, *square*, SQUARE. Square to the third power. Cubed.

"Then we make it like Mr. and Mrs. and all that Togetherness jazz. Real cool, doll. That's the way it's going to be."

And in the beginning that was the way it was.

Mike flipped back the pages to the Little Rock item and read it again. *Nine years old! Christ, could they get knocked up that young?* For an instant he caught a vision of smooth dimpled childish thighs moving apart provocatively, deliberately. He pinched shut his eyes, rubbed them. The vision vanished. Adjusting his glasses, he flipped pages in haste to another part of the paper:

*NATE HALE URGES
U. S. TO SPEND*

He reads the words three times before he understood their surface factual meaning. Submerged notions impinged, and he could trace by the damp slap of Mary's naked feet her pilgrimage along the linoleum-covered hall from bathroom to kitchen to pantry where they came to rest and metal scraped on metal. Moistly again, flap, flap, to the dressing alcove; sing of rocking metal hangers, snap

of rubber against slack damp flesh, whisper of cloth. *Noisy bitch!*

Another vision, waking dream: furry bodies coupled, outlines vague as those of an ancient movie out of focus, sea-sounds, humped driving motion, wordless cries . . . A prickling cold spread over his face. He shook his head, cleared it, touched his mustache, and read:

Washington, D. C.—(AP)—Speaking at an elite gathering of U. S. Chamber of Commerce and trade association executives in the Mayflower Hotel, Nate Hale told why the big need in America today is for more consumption on credit.

"Like it's all yours for the asking, daddy. I'm out of the bathroom now."

The popular head of The Knights of the Flag, a non-profit, non-political group, said, "Spend, spend, spend! That's what every patriotic citizen of this great democracy should do."

"Get with it, daddy. It's free now."

She couldn't ask him for the money for her next fix; she remembered he had told her to, but she couldn't put it into words, not to *him*. Smiling always, he made her account for the next ten-dollar bill item by item, penny by penny. She was trapped, *had* to ask for money. He smiled, gave her what she needed. She promised to kick the habit. Would he help?

"Sure, doll. Like they say in the movies, I'm with you all the way."

He inspected her next grocery list, took off his dark glasses, stared at her. She cracked her knuckles, plucked at her clothing.

"Fine list," he said, made a few suggestions. "Got to eat to live, doll. How much you need?"

"Maybe fifteen," thinking she might net five.

"*How much?*"

"Well, like you added some stuff, daddy, but maybe . . ."

He gave her twenty. She stared at the bill. Then he gave her another ten. "Pin money," he said.

Every time she cleaned the apartment she found a few bills here

and there, under an ashtray, behind books, even in a dark corner of the dressing alcove on the floor. Should she tell him? She held back as much of the money as she could, set booby traps for him with face powder to see if he examined the places where she had found the bills. He never touched these places, and now he waved aside all discussion of grocery lists.

"How much you need, doll? Just tell me how much."

He gave what she asked. What was he up to now? She sweat; her habit bloomed. The Man even delivered to the door, like with milk every other day.

Mike had always longed for a setup like this. Naked control: I-do-this, you-do-that. Precise mechanical response. Predictable. None of this what-does-she-feel, what's-she-going-to-do? jazz. To hell with that. Call your shots. Like with Science, push the buttons, tab the results.

But the buttons to be pushed, especially the newest ones, rutted and increased. Rabbits. So many, so many; he could not find in this wilderness the gut-relaxing pleasure he had imagined in pushing the buttons. His fingers were always busy. Limits must be sought.

One night he took her to bed early, finished quickly. He got up, washed in the bathroom, began to dress.

"Mike," she called.

He did not answer.

"What you doing?"

He felt to see if the knot of his tie was straight.

"Why don't you turn on the light?"

She heard him slip a suit off a hanger. A moment later he poked her shoulder.

"Put on a little something seductive," he said.

"Huh?"

"Like you're gonna have an eager passionate guest in a few minutes. So make with the perfume and the black lace."

"Guest?"

His cold lips brushed her cheek. "Just keep your motor running, doll."

Rubbing goose-pimpled arms, she packed partially and then unpacked, paced the apartment, turned on all the lights, turned them

off. By the time Mike returned with the mark, only the light in the dressing alcove was on and she had put on a fresh face and a black negligee.

Short, stocky, partially bald, he reeked of bad teeth and beer, talked constantly. To her he was faceless, a sweaty body and an endless raucous voice. He was fatherly ("Baby, I got a daughter about your age."), inquisitive ("Now how the hell did a sweet little thing like you ever get mixed up in such a business?"), deliberate ("Don't rush me now, sweet stuff, I got to rest a second before we go off in a blaze of glory."), helpful ("I'm a linen supplier. You store your sheets and towels. Rent 'em from me, it's cheaper. I'll send one of my drivers around next week. OK?"). Laboring heavily upon her, he nibbled at her breasts ("M-m-m-m . . . as dandy as candy!").

The job took nearly two hours; she had to push him out of the apartment, still talking. When the solitude swelled to bursting, she hummed disconnected notes. This was something she had read in a paperback book with a gun and a nude on the cover.

Mike returned while she was running her bath. He said nothing, watched her slip into the tub and, when he knew she was looking, consulted his watch.

"You're not in charity, doll. Time is money."

All the spots of her body the mark had touched she lathered again and again. Mike took out a roll of bills, peeled off two fives, let them drift to the steamy floor.

"Bastard!" she hissed, "Dirty, rotten, stinking bastard!"

The blow was light, almost playful, but it knocked her head against the tiled wall. Tears cut eccentric channels through the suds on her cheeks.

"You do a fine job, but you gotta step up production." He shook his head sadly. "Please the customer, yeah. But let's do it in less than an hour. OK? The fastest way is the easiest way. He's just as happy, and you got time for another."

He wound his watch, yawned. "Look, I'll demonstrate." He peeled off two more fives, waved them. "In the same time you took you coulda made this much more, only the character cut out, tired of waiting." Tenderly, he folded the bills, put them away. "You get with it and I'll raise the piece rate. Dig? For your in-

formation, this is known as the incentive system."

The power contained in the contemplated buttons vanquished ancient deprivations, real and imaginary; his stride on the street became heavier, took on the ring of certainty. He attended no parties, avoided all the places inhabited by the people he knew, cultivated only potential marks. The masks, those used and those still in the state of open-eyed dreaming, gathered dust. He knew the good thing and he wore it, *was* it, everyday. He ate sparingly, no longer drank, lost weight. It was at this time that he began to read only the *Mirror*. Previously he had scanned rapidly for party talk as many as two books a month, rarely read with seriousness one issue of one newspaper a week. Now he fondled the books in his apartment, opened them for a moment, put them back on the shelf. They bored him.

His business with marks filled most of his time. He bought drinks, paid off bartenders and cops, circulated, telling jokes and commenting on what he read in the *Mirror*. At no time had he been so easily understood, accepted. When he entered a bar, those in authority smiled; when he bought drinks for all and sipped his coke, those who counted patted him on the back. He had made it.

But in the long walks between bars, or the thousand and one seconds between the joke and the laugh, he thought about Mary. He was subject, she object. He aided her habit; she abetted the death of his potency. Whenever he bathed, went to the bathroom, changed clothes, he thought about it.

Eventually he drove himself to other women; first to those he had known with success; later to strangers, each of whom became either older or younger, always more thankful for attention. No good. He didn't want any of them, and when he tried to force the scene each lacked the talent for playing effectively the role he had assigned. Mary was expert.

Her skill grew; even when he set his mind against wanting her, she managed. This complicity (so it seemed to him) drove him to further excesses. She must hate this, as he did, she *must*. He had to know how much. The act became more involved, ritualistic. He lived for and through it.

Then on the street, looking at the slobs and the signs, with his mask on, he told himself that only experience was the thing. It

didn't matter what as long as you lived it up. Undifferentiated feeling. Dig. That was all. Thought was shit. Make it, man. Like spontaneous. Mike delved; Mary spanned.

Even in the beginning they had talked little of what mattered; but as he continued to press inward the confines of her privacy, and as she saw more clearly this pressure as deliberate provocation, their talk, as if by mutual consent, became more sparse, superficial. He helped to create this thing, and it was another hell. Each word he dragged from her *had* to have another, a deeper meaning. And her silence became a wall he had to break through to enter that final arena of union in which there would be no spectators and no quarter.

What does she have to do? he asked. Relax on her back, activate her pelvis, touch lightly with her fingers the skin of the body straining upon her. Nothing. He blundered into the bathroom late one night. She was washing her hair, crying because soap had gotten in her eyes. He gave her a damp washcloth to get out the soap, then helped her with rinsing. She was naked; he looked at her as she buried her head in a towel.

She might say anything, anytime, to him without warning; this threat grew; he thought about it, early in the morning before coffee, after the last mark had left. He lost interest in striking her when she gave him a bad time, no longer checked on where she hid the junk and equipment. He spent long idle hours dreaming up diabolical taunts, then never used them when the occasion arose.

He resigned his position, told Mary he would devote all his time to their business. For a few months he did. Early in the morning and late at night he was in the right places talking to the right people. Assiduously, he exercised his executive function in a more direct way. Her proficiency grew; on schedule the money poured in. When he became afraid to carry about the big roll, he opened a bank account. At first he made his deposits every other week, later once a week on Wednesday. Soon it became a bore; the marks called whether he went to the bars or not. He fled to the organized distraction of the world of work, got another job at another TV research department, rode the kind of schedule he could afford to detest.

But he didn't detest it. Killing time was the problem, and the job did that, the job and the *Mirror*. He no longer tried to bug the squares on the subway; even that was a bore. He was stalked persistently by a curious idea: He was the only person in the world; all the other people he saw and brushed against were not real. He was amused by this idea; he permitted it to enter his mind whenever it so desired.

One night he dreamed Mary was piloting a huge blimp in a clear but starless sky. Behind the blimp trailed a long narrow banner studded with lights blinking out the message D E A T H. He yelled, "Stop, stop, stop!" And at that instant, in a burst of blinding light, this thing so far above him, totally out of reach, exploded. The big banner fell on him. Choking, bathed in sweat, crying out for help, he awakened fighting the bed clothing he had pulled somehow over his head.

He sat up in bed and felt in the darkness for Mary. She was gone. Now she had begun to find her own customers, take them to a room she had rented. Weeks before he had gone through the motions of trying to find this room. He had failed and promptly put this failure from his mind. So what? She gave him his cut from her income. He stuffed it in his pocket; when the pockets of one pair of pants filled, he wore another suit. She cooked his meals, took care of the apartment, was at his beck and call for bed. What more did he want? He had it made.

The dream of the blimp and its banner persisted, developed various disguises to lure him back into sleep. In one variation the banner blinked out a confirmation of the idea that he was the only person on earth, but he could never recall the words of the proof. In another, the banner advertised a baseball team. Was it the Braves, the Dodgers, the White Sox? Upon awakening he could not remember.

Forefinger of his right hand fondling his mustache, jiggling his right knee up and down rapidly, he read:

*"But we need more than confidence today," Hale said.
"We need that all-out, go-getting enthusiasm, that faith in
God and Nation that first inspired our glorious system of*

Free Enterprise for Free Individuals. We need . . .

Gently, Mary pushed aside his newspaper. His mouth flew open, his knee froze. She had never dared do a thing like this.

"Honey," she said softly, "let's cut out to Mandy's. They got a real cool trio."

With all the contempt he could manage, the *Mirror* clutched tightly to his chest, he looked her over. Surprise! He had expected her business attire of low-cut cocktail dress and high heels; instead she wore a Village uniform of loose-fitting shirt, tight slacks and flats. Her eyes, he noted with satisfaction, revealed a recent fix; this, at least, was as it should be.

He said she wouldn't find anything but *free* business at Mandy's, "Wine guzzling beats and beer swilling college punks looking for a cheap thrill. All of them put together couldn't raise enough for one trick." He shook out his newspaper:

" . . . to cast out the devils of controversy, the sin of criticizing the American Way of Life, what our forefathers fought and bled for. We need . . ."

"No business. Not tonight. Just dig this trio and a little beer."

"You go. Live it up, doll."

"No. Like I want *us* to go. Come on, daddy." She tried to catch his hand.

There was a strange quality in her voice, a richness he had never known. A chill infinitesimal, but as commanding as a needle prick on the eyelid, began in the small of his back to the left of his spine.

"Why?"

"Because . . . like just because."

"Because *why*?"

Her laughter was soft and warm. She twisted about before him, bringing one leg in front of the other, making more full and curved the line of her hips.

"Like because *tonight*, daddy, we ought to get with it. And those cats at Mandy's are way out."

The chill became a strange plant which sent out hair roots under the skin of his back. His forefinger sought his mustache, but he managed to abort this search. Many months ago, near their beginning, he had taken Mary to Mandy's: the same trio had been there. So why this *tonight*, this *us*? He gave what he hoped to be

a snort of contempt and turned back to the Hale item:

"... *unity. That's what we need. Unity...*"

He felt her eyes upon him, looked up. Her face was scrubbed so clean it shown like polished stone. The only touch of color was her lipstick.

"We just cut out and dig that jazz . . . and maybe a few sets of talk."

"Talk? About what?"

"Just talk. You know, yak it up a little."

The creeping of the hair roots stopped; the plant sent down tap roots of ice. A vision of a starless night crossed his mind; something winking and familiar was hovering in this abyss, threatening, about to fall. He started to shiver, turned the response into an exaggerated shrug, dropped his eyes to the *Mirror*:

"... *Only with a united faith in God and the Nation can we triumph over the atheistic powers of evil that now threaten us within and without.*"

"Like tonight's our last chance, Mike." Her voice was low, husky, almost a whisper.

He lowered the newspaper, folded it neatly, looked at her. "Last chance for *what*?"

"Us . . . talk. Like I dig you, you dig me." She rubbed the thumb of her right hand about the point of her chin. "Because tomorrow, Mike . . . tomorrow I cut out for good. On my own."

"Drool, junkie, drool." He tightened his grip on the newspaper, crushing it into his hand, holding it like a club. "Only do it someplace else. OK?"

"Daddy, I got everything packed, sent out. Except what I got on." She fluffed out the bosom of her shirt, snapped the elastic waist of her slacks against her skin. "And one or two little things I'll stash in my bag when we cut out tonight." She jerked her head toward the pantry.

"So what's this hassle about talking? You made up your mind, so leave. Leave, go ahead. *Leave!*" He pointed with his newspaper to the door.

She shook her head and looked at him, her eyes huge and naked. "Daddy, don't you dig . . . just a little?"

He tapped the newspaper lightly on his knee. Dig? Dig what?

She had shot up as usual. She wanted to leave? Leave. But she'd be back crying at his door, and damned soon. She'd see.

"Like, man, we've shacked up how long? This is our last night." She ran her fingers through her hair, stared at the ceiling. "We've done everything, almost, *but* talk. I mean really get with it."

He laughed, jabbed his dark glasses hard against the bridge of his nose. "You shoot double tonight?"

She took her fingers from her hair, looked at him. "No big kick, Mike. I shoot up, I come on like human."

He said that was fine, fine. Human! He laughed. That would be the day when he saw anything human in a creep like her. Instead of sarcastic, his voice went shrill. He beat the newspaper on his right knee. Whack, whack, whack: it began to tear. He glanced up, saw she was watching. He tossed the paper a foot or two above his head, caught it. On the third toss Mary caught it. His eyes narrowed. She hid the paper behind her, stuck out her belly, smiled.

"Mike, why do you beat yourself?"

He sputtered, dug his fists into the cushions of the sofa to push himself up on his feet. With the rolled and tattered paper, gently, she pushed him back.

"I don't mean just with this." She tapped herself on the knee with the paper. "Like you got a lot of bad habits. Jittery stuff, man. Playing with your mustache all the time, making like you play the drum with your right leg, fooling around with your glasses . . ."

He knew his laughter was too loud, tried to control it, failed. His body heaved; it became a spasm. Tears poured from his eyes.

"Jesus Christ! You . . . *you!*" He pointed at her, shook his finger. He could not force out another word. His body writhed with what he wanted to say and silent laughter. He gasped like a hooked fish; his right hand, like the hysterical tail, slapped again and again on the sofa's cushions.

"Like it's nothing personal, man. But those shitty newspapers." She looked at the tattered edition in her hand. "Who digs that kind of jazz? Just squares, sick squares. And always calling me *doll*. I put all this together." Her smile was kind. "Mike, I know you."

"You . . . you with a monkey as big as a mountain! *You* talk about *habits*?"

She shook her head, used the paper to push him back gently. "Daddy, listen to me. The monkey's not a habit, it's a way of life. Like you shoot shit you got just one problem. Getting the shit. There it is and you live with it." She sighed, made her left hand into a fist and looked at it. "I know that. Man, like the monkey and me are old friends. But you, Mike . . . Sometimes I think you don't even know, can't even admit you *got* a problem."

She sat down on the coffee table, stared thoughtfully at the rug. He started to say you're high, doll, real high, but didn't because at that instant he recalled the first dream of her piloting the blimp with the banner spelling D E A T H.

"Want to know something?" she asked, hands on her spare hips, looking at him. "I think maybe life's the only real habit. So we get hooked on something else to kick it."

He said if he had a soapbox he would give it to her, but he didn't, so would she please go drool someplace else. He paused, and suddenly he wanted to tell her about his dream so badly that it hurt. He was wetting his dry, cold lips, searching for the right way to begin when she snatched off his glasses.

"Damn it, honey, why do you wear these things?" She put them aside on the coffee table. "You look a lot cuter now." She giggled, crossed her left leg high over her right, hugged it tightly to her chest.

He leaped to his feet, hauled off with his right hand to strike. She did not recoil; she didn't even bat her eyes. Instead, she released her left knee and reached with both hands for the trembling mate of the one he had raised.

"So hit me," she said. "If you got to, hit me. You hit me before. But, daddy, let me tell you something. I never been afraid of you . . . *never*."

His hand dropped. She caught it, too.

"Like maybe because I been too bugged up being afraid of myself." She squeezed his hands and released them.

He could not move or speak. The walls of the room seemed to melt, flow, escape. He had never really looked closely at her. Wide-set, unblinking, sparkling with curiosity, her eyes were those

of the very young, or the very old. He knew that if he could bring one hand to touch her cheek he would find all that he would ever know of life and warmth. Music from a radio in the next apartment helped to freeze his hand.

She recognized the tune first and laughed. Then he recognized it, too, and thrust the hand that might have touched her cheek into his pocket. She got up slowly from the coffee table, turned, walked to the window, parted the draperies, looked down upon the lighted street. She hummed the melody; he was startled to find her voice so good.

He could not see clearly; his eyes seemed misted. From the rear, she appeared unbelievably, sadly, thin and small. The lights from outside cast a marbly, phantasmal sheen on the outline of her face. Then, with the orchestra, she began to sing:

*Old love, new love,
Ev-ry love but true love. Love **

Her voice trailed off and she turned around to smile at him. "You taught me a lot, Mike. Before I met you I was on that True Love kick. Now I know there's just love."

She shrugged, walked to the dressing room, picked up something, went to the pantry. With the orchestra on the final chorus, he listened to the music, not to her movements. The song died and she appeared with an over-sized hand bag slung over her left shoulder. The bag made a slapping sound on her hip as she approached.

She kissed him on the cheek. "Love, Mike, *just love.*"
And she was gone.

First he put on his dark glasses, then he opened the newspaper. He sought for the Hale story but couldn't find it. Holding the *Mirror* at arm's length, he began at the beginning, searched every page carefully. He walked about the room rattling the newspaper.

He never found the story about spending and unity. He found

* "Love for Sale," words and music by Cole Porter. Reprinted by permission of Harms, Inc., New York.

PAUL HERR

something else:

HANGED MAN FOUND IN BRONX HOTEL

The body of an unidentified man was found early this morning in the Astarte Hotel. Police were unable to establish his identity because all labels of his clothing had been removed. No cards or letters were found on his person.

Captain Acteon, in charge of the investigation, reported that an effort to establish the identity of the deceased through his dentures had failed.

Mrs. Diana Stag, a hotel maid, found the body. It was hanging by a belt from a capped gas fixture in an empty closet.

The only possessions of the deceased were the clothes on the body and some small change on the dresser.

Captain Acteon said there was no question of homicide.

"This is suicide, pure and simple," he said.

The deceased left an undated and unsigned note printed in block letters.

It read:

GOOD LUCK TO THE
NEW YORK YANKEES

McAfee

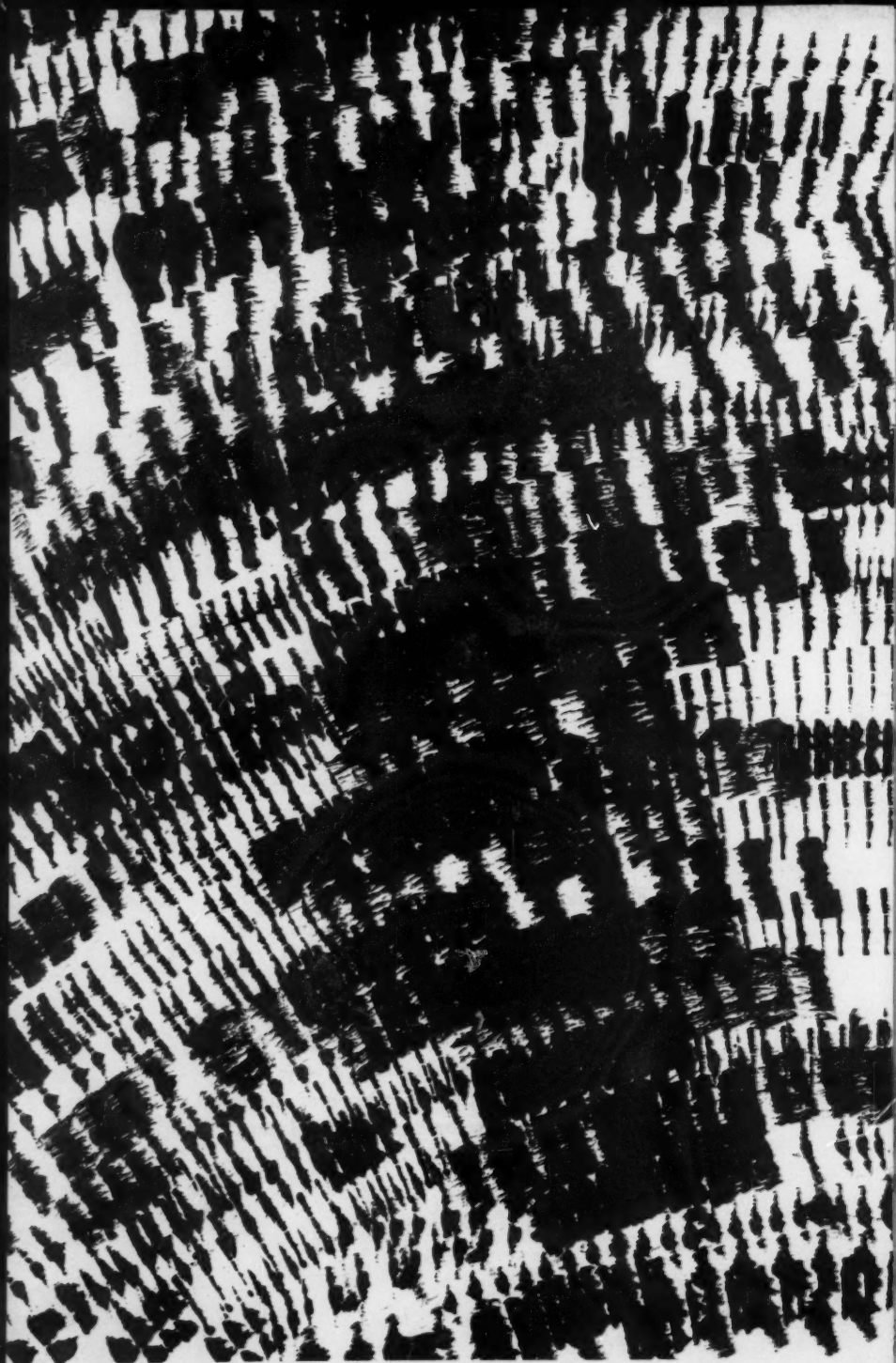
UNE SAISON EN ENFER

Rimbaud, demented, the angry child
Stamping his peasant feet at the wind,
Wept later when the weather was mild
And he was motherless and with no friend.

Summers teach us strange declensions,
Drive us from home, then drive us back;
The very best of our final intentions
May leave our minds demoniac.

Even money, father of all,
When Father has left on a virile pursuit,
Only exclaims the frightening pall
Of a handsome face gone irresolute.

The money is safe and will not rust
But cancer is moving upward always.
There is nothing the wavering eyes can trust
When dementia returns on the final days.



—Arnaldo Bomodoro / Courtesy of The Bolles Gallery

Thomas Gallagher

ON SEEING

A MAN PUT TO DEATH

THE DEATH CHAMBER might have been the laundry room in the basement of an apartment house. The walls were a cold unfertile green, there were pipes (freshly painted with silver radiator paint) running overhead across the ceiling, and, as we crowded in from the snowy yard through which the vans had taken us, the only sounds were the familiar gritty ones of wet soles against a concrete floor.

I felt at once that if I had wandered in here alone off some New York City side street, I would have thought nothing of the make-shift-looking chair, set like some crazy janitor's workbench in the center of a large black rubber mat on the floor. I had spoken to a young Irish guard in the other building while we were waiting for the Warden to brief us, and recalled now his reaction to my question whether a glass wall of some kind separated the witnesses from the electric chair itself. He had smiled as though in appreciation of why I might think such a thing, and then had said, "No, it's not like that at all. Lynch will be able to spit at you if he wants to. It's just a room."

Only the white hospital table on wheels behind the chair, the odd-looking gadgets on a black table in a corner, the rows of seats

and the three-foot-high wooden partition separating them from the chair itself (to prevent pictures from being taken as in the case of Ruth Snyder, the young guard had said), would have made one realize that it was more than just a cellar.

There being fewer seats than witnesses, those filing in last were hurriedly lined up against the back and side walls by the men in uniform, who had begun to appear victimized by the clock themselves. I heard not one instruction given. No one in authority spoke, nor was there any need for words. Obedience seemed endemic to the room, that and a compulsive conscientiousness that made even the cub reporters keep racing their pencils through their notebooks. One, I noticed, was making a minutely detailed drawing of the chair, another kept counting the doors in the room, another appeared tortured that he didn't have a tape measure. They seemed feverishly to be piling facts between them and their own emotions, while the older reporters, who had perhaps been here before, waited and observed with what seemed a deficiency of emotion.

The Warden stood apart in silence as the three uniformed men stationed strategically around the chair waited for the last of the witnesses to enter and the door to the yard to be closed. Then, though no one spoke, a signal seemed to pass among them and the tallest of the three, who might have been a descendant of Abraham Lincoln, went to a side door, opened it part way, looked out, and came back to his place again.

These three men, whose assigned job it was to strap the condemned man in the chair, had what can only be described as devout expressions on their faces. Indeed, it was at this moment, after the Lincoln-esque guard had returned to his place, that the door he had partially opened struck me as being the "sacristy" door, and that I saw the room and what was taking place in a religious light.

"There's an altar for saying Mass just a little ways in from the death chamber," the young Irish guard in the other building had said. And now the thought occurred to me that the same lumber that had been used to build the altar might very well have been used for the "pews" we were sitting in, as well as for the "altar rail" separating us from the proceedings. The wood looked like oak; it was stained and varnished the way the electric chair was not. But the chair looked like oak too, so that just before the "sacristy" door

opened all the way, it was as if my power of association had become one with my power to be horrified.

There followed a pause of not more than ten seconds during which something like torment webbed the air and made it hard to breathe. The anxiety of death belonged to our existence too, and in that sense Lynch had a secret hold on us.

Suddenly the door opened all the way and a priest walked in with lowered head, his hands clasped, and praying aloud with great earnestness of feeling. He did not ignore the forty-odd people in the room so much as to find no room for them in his consciousness. During the next three minutes, the priest neither looked our way nor showed the slightest inclination to, and those minutes gained great dignity thereby. His shiny brocaded chasuble, broader than his own broad shoulders and extending majestically down from them to below his knees, completely concealed the small urchin-like man behind him. Then the chasuble was gone (the priest had quickly stepped to one side) and Lynch stood before us in the cold interior light.

He was wearing a clean white shirt with the sleeves rolled up and the two top buttons at the neck unbuttoned. The gray prison pants had slits in them to the knees that made the exact location of the legs hard to determine. Only the bedroom slippers, incongruously showing themselves on the concrete floor, put him on his own two feet. A guard stood on either side of him, but for precaution's sake rather than support. Lynch was weak and shrunken, a puny, undernourished man, but he entered on his feet.

My immediate thought on seeing his face was of the absolutely incommunicable distance between him and us. He was dead already, a conscious corpse come to attend his own autopsy. And it was from behind this awful knowledge that he already, *a priori*, did not exist, that he looked at us looking at him.

In the other building I had thought that there were cruel men among the twenty-four formally invited by the state, men who looked upon the execution as a bonus that they had coming to them for all the time they'd put in on the right side of the law. But when Lynch walked in I completely lost the thread of this thought. Perhaps what I really lost was my own capacity for cruelty, and with it my capacity for seeing it in others. Here was naked

anxiety as I had never seen it before. Lynch was beyond fear, threatened not by something but by nothingness itself. He was only alive enough to make death possible.

And yet as he was led to the chair and with father-firm tenderness coaxed into it, the endeavor to persist in his own being expressed itself in an unforgettable smile at the people in suits and overcoats who had come to see him die.

Meanwhile not one second was being wasted by the men in uniform. The two who had escorted him in stepped back, and the three who had from the beginning been stationed around the chair began to strap him in. He allowed the two bent low in front of him to separate his legs so the calves would be lined up with the straps attached to the front legs of the chair, looking down at them and then half around at Abraham Lincoln, who was preparing the head electrode with a compassionate intensity that made his cheekbones look like sores.

Lynch's relationship with these guards precluded animosity. It was a faultless, even an ideal relationship for being in the very process of ceasing to exist. What made it heartbreaking was the way Lynch seemed to feel cut off from any creative participation in it. He was an object, a "thing" devoid even of the need to be obedient, and his timid half-smiles were attempts, I thought, to rectify this intolerable situation. He wanted his personality to be present at its own extinction, wanted us to take it into account, and I will never forget those smiles for that reason. For by remaining a thing he might have avoided the experience and died, as it were, without knowing it. He chose instead to be himself, the man condemned.

Earlier I had been told by the young guard that a small sponge, about the same size as the shaven crown of the condemned man's head, was inserted between the head and the head electrode to facilitate the passing of electricity from the electrode to the brain. The sponge, he had said, was soaked in brine for this purpose—to make absolutely certain that the condemned man's brain would be destroyed before it could begin to register pain.

If he had not told me this, I don't think I would have understood the look Lynch gave the guard behind him when the latter, slipping the briny-wet sponge under the electrode cap, began fitting

the cap to his head. The sponge must have been not only wet, but cold, and Lynch, smiling good-naturedly at the way it tingled against his freshly shaven scalp, seemed to find this a comfort to have to consider.

The truth is that he seemed more and more desperately—as the seconds ticked away and the three men worked with ever-increasing speed to get the job done—to be trying to relate what was happening to him to something habitual, in the past, that his imagination might at least pursue. There was something splendid about this, I thought, something that made me want to stand up not for right or wrong but for the endless complexity of being human. Lynch, with less than a minute to live, was regaining his innocence before our very eyes. He was no longer a thing but a little boy smiling with indulgent annoyance at how ineptly, compared to his own mother or father or big brother Charley, the stranger behind him was trying to fit him with a skull cap.

The two guards in front were just finishing with his legs, and as the one working on his left leg got up and started working on his left arm, as another strap was being passed from behind around his chest and pulled and fastened with such force that his white shirt crimped along the leather's edge, Lynch, with only his right arm still free and knowing that the face mask would be next, looked round for the last time at the people with the homburgs and fedoras resting on their laps. He looked over at the standees against the wall and then back at those in seats.

I was in the second row and a sourceless shock of recognition passed through me as his eyes met mine. I had never seen him in my life before and I'm sure he had not seen me. But, at that moment, we knew each other and he smiled and waved goodbye. I smiled back, or tried to, but I know I waved, and then a wide and heavy leather belt was strapped across his face that locked his head back against the chair. It extended from just above his eyebrows down to just below his lower lip. It was tight where it had to be, across his eyebrows and mouth, but had room to spare across the nose.

This strapping of the face mask was the last operation before the merciful pulling of the switch, and yet because the three sweating guards had to be given time to step back off the rubber mat,

and the executioner, unseen in an open anteroom, had to check from a distance to see that they had made no mistakes, Lynch might have died of suffocation were it not for the fact that a slit had carefully been cut in the leather where it crossed his mouth, and another where it crossed his nostrils.

He was alive in accordance with the law, therefore, when the unseen executioner pulled the switch and Lynch's body jumped and strained to the uttermost to break its bindings, which now appeared not quite tight enough. The fists turned hammer-like against the chair's arms, the exposed part of the forehead turned red, and all his hair stood straight up around the head electrode like some awful mutation of a flower.

Then the first bolt was turned off and a languidness overcame the body, the fists opening upward and the lungs exhaling. And because you knew that his capacity to feel pain had been destroyed, you wondered with a feeling of reverence, when the electricity was turned on a second time and the unwitting body fought against it, about the insistence of life to go on no matter what. The voltage this second time was audible, as if thousands of bees were locked in some closet and trying to get out. Smoke rose from Lynch's head and liquid began flowing from his mouth. It came through the slits in the mask and rolled down his chin.

I glanced at the three guards who had strapped him in. Each had his head lowered, his hands clasped down in front of him, and his eyes closed. They seemed to be trying to think what thought could not think.

Lynch went languid again, and then the electricity was turned on a third time. But the body was a plaything for the current now, and though it still jumped and smoked, its power to do so came from the electricity itself.

After a second's pause, the priest walked up and made the sign of the cross on Lynch's forehead with extreme unction oil. When he stepped back, Abraham Lincoln stepped forward to unstrap Lynch's chest and unbutton his shirt. The chest, that of a black Irishman with almost blue-white skin, was unmarked but soaking wet from sweat. The guard got a clean white towel, dried it, and, his eyes bloodshot with emotion, turned to the prison doctor, who stepped forward with a stethoscope and put it to Lynch's chest.

"I pronounce this man dead," he said, and immediately the guards began ushering us out. The reporters crowded round the Warden to get the official time. "Entered room at 11:01, pronounced dead at 11:04."

Meanwhile the three guards had uncovered Lynch's face and were lifting him onto the white hospital table, which someone had wheeled round in front of the chair. Lynch remained in the same sitting position as they lifted him and the expression on his face was one of absolute exhaustion. He looked like a man in desperate need of a place to rest, and finding it for him was the last duty of the three unhappy guards.

In the van on the way back to the main building, the other witnesses asked me if Lynch had been a friend of mine. When I said no, that I'd never seen him before, they said things like, "Funny, the way he waved at you like that." "Do you have a brother who knew him?" And so forth. I got the feeling that they didn't believe me, that they thought I was trying to dissociate myself from a murderer. But that wasn't it at all. I knew him only at that moment when he waved goodbye.

CONTACT

WANTED: Upper-class and graduate students to represent Angel Island Publications, Inc. at colleges and universities throughout the country; to become **CONTACT ON CAMPUS**. Responsibilities will include: editorial scouting for *Contact* material and/or book possibilities; publicity; and sales promotion on both the retail and subscription levels.

ON

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Homer Anderson

MEMORIAL EPITAPH

(Of the unclaimed ex-patriots in a prison burial plot)

We shared a like inconstancy . . . (unfounded
Impoverished of a graceless age;)

but give

Us one to sing across our little ground
Who will not stress the dirge, nor strive
To pay late homage to our base, unloved . . .
Nor speak so softly here.

We who have heard

The trumpets blare, (unheeding and unmoved
Perhaps, by civil rule) have not interred
That call with like disdain.

This simple grave

Is not a scale to weigh deliberate wrong
Against a single right, nor title 'Brave'
The balancing.

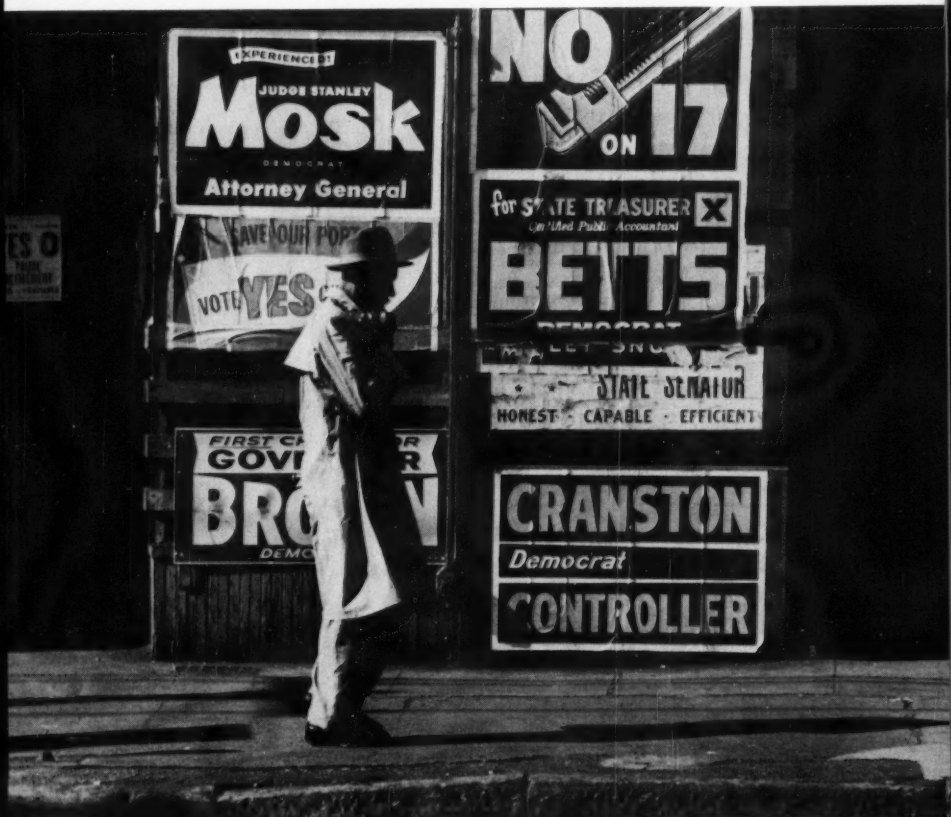
Singer, this be our song:

These rusting, iron-starred testimonials chant,
"They were not, all the time, unvaliant."

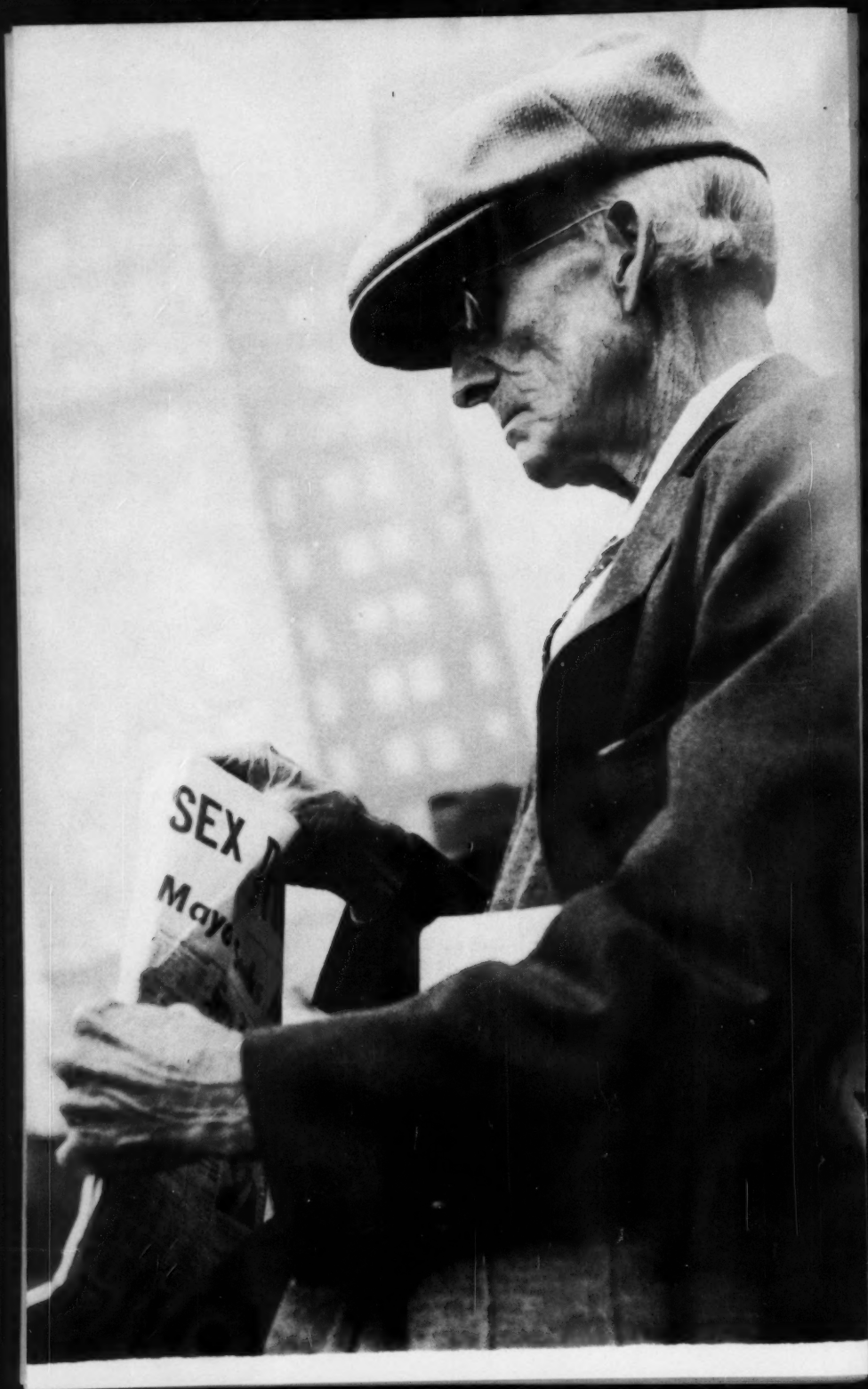
The editors express their appreciation to The Robert Lindner Foundation of Baltimore, Maryland, for directing Mr. Anderson's work (also see pages 66 and 67) to *Contact* for this special issue.

(Quote)

Some truth may lie . . .



in Max Scheler's generalization . . .



2 SHOCK SUCK
"UNDERWORLD STORY"
T OPEN ALL NITE

. . that moral indignation is a peculiar fact of middle class psychology . . .





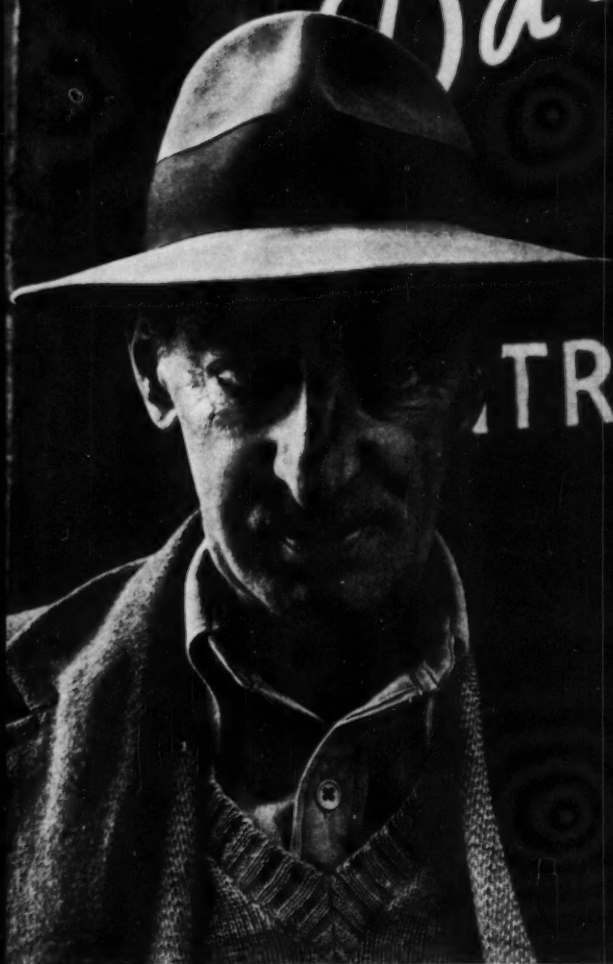
and represents a disguised form of repressed envy.

The larger truth lies perhaps . .



Da-Lite

TRANCE





in the brawling nature of American development . . .





and in the social character of crim







Crime, in many ways, is a Coney Island mirror . . .



(End Quote)

caricaturing the morals and manners of a society.



IF WE STICK
TOGETHER
WE CAN WIN



The preceding quotation is from
"Crime as an American Way of Life,"
one fine essay among many in Daniel
Bell's new book, *The End of Ideology*,
published by the Free Press.



Photography for "Some Truth May Lie"
by Phil Palmer (1-4-9), Eugene Anthony (10),
Dorothea Lange (3), Jerry Stoll (8), Bill
Gamble (12-14), and Ernest Lowe (2-5-6-7-11-13-15-16).
*Note: (11) Members of the Un-American
Activities Committee and (13), their
counsel, Mr. Richard Arens.
Continuity, if there is any, by Ryan.*

"sum, ergo vogito . . ." (to distort Descartes)

PERTAINING TO POETS . . .

Whether he is because he thinks he is,
Or no,
It remains that he is of being, now:
It remains that without thinking the first thought,
He became;
As those before him in the same blind turmoil.
Came with a boiling and bottomless ocean
Of longing and loneliness within him:
Came, exploding and shattering the confines
Of his un-being!

Came,
Deserting the deathening incubator
Of tranquillity in triumph and stillness in light.

For he is very of the vagabond,
And as clearly as the raging blood
Roars to the most outflung cell of the restless body,
So must he wander the courses and byways
Of his living world;
For his heart is a curious captain,
And his mind is a ruthless pilot!
Whether he rush unawares to the one hundred and
Eighty winds,
Or perish in the single direction of torrential storm,
He shall be on his way to somewhere.

Because he holds

The image of the unseen, in his eye;
The lust of the unfelt, in his hand;
The thirst of the untasted upon his lip;
The cry of the unheard, in his ear;
And the awesome sense of the eternal
Existence of untried trails and the unwalked ways,
He flings him upon the wailing wings of wanting,
And draws the ark of his answerless spirit
To the saddening shoals of wisdom.

TWO SONNETS

I

Where have I failed?

In troubled retrospect
I've gleaned the very sediment and silt
Of thought, for dregs with which I might erect
Some likeness to the structure of my guilt.
Now I must learn that history.

Though pain
Alone, is turn-key on that hidden door,
A conscious, rigid pride bids me refrain
Entry.

Barren of choice, the brittle core
lies in that haunted vault, and lost
Am I, until that shadowed cell is bright
With truth, and some summation of the cost
Of reconstruction brings me to the light . . .
While pride would yet this impudence dismay
And seal my footsteps to a darker way.

II

A vibrant discord from the tower blares
Alarm across the sunlit field!

The hoes
Are gathered for the count; a prisoner stares
Horizonward to weigh the chance.

He knows
That Hope, a thin intangible at best,
Demands a finer effort than the run
Can give, and is surprised to find the test
Still being tried.

He feels akin to one
Who knows the air is rigid with his name;
Whose furtive steps must even now retrace
The path of rash impulse.

Was ever claim
Of victor made more sad, than in this race
That finds the once-warm, waiting arms, composed;
The window darkened and the last door closed?



Jack Cope

THE DRY TIME

GRAY, QUIET CLOUDS slid slowly and easily over the treetops of the Ozark mountains. I stood on the porch and wondered if we were to get some rain at last. It had been a dry year. The big pond just downhill from the barn had dried up completely and for a week I had to take the horses across the road to the wooded twenty acres where the small pond still held enough to satisfy their thirst.

Carol called me in. She wasn't quite drunk yet. "What the hell you doing out there. Come here a minute."

I took a look around—the fence that ran downhill along the road needed mending—and went in.

She was half-sitting, half-lying on the unmade bed, drinking gin and Seven-Up. The Seagrams bottle was down to the half-way mark and there were four or five empty Seven-Up bottles on the floor. Two of them were laying on their sides. Her blonde hair was straggled around her shoulders and she had traces of yesterday's make-up on.

I wondered if I could get away to see June this week.

Carol looked up at me when I came in, but I ignored her and went into the kitchen and opened the refrigerator. The gray cat came out from under the stove, looking for milk, and the collie

bitch we had just bought ran over to see what the cat was doing. Our old cocker spaniel raised his head and snarled at them. They ignored him.

There were only four cans of beer left. Whatever I decided about June, I'd have to go to town today.

The cat got under my feet as I turned to open the beer can on the table. I cursed. What in the hell was I doing on thirty acres of rock in Arkansas? Six hundred miles from Rush Street. Two horses, three chickens, a bull-calf, two dogs, a cat, and a female that didn't know whether to leave me now or wait until I had put some more property in her name. And me. A fine menage.

As soon as I walked back into the living room, she got to the point. "When are you supposed to meet Al?"

I started to tell her next week, then I got a glimpse of her thigh, coolbronze against the white sheet. It reminded me of how she had looked under the spotlights of a dozen strip-tease joints just a year or so ago, all sun-goldened skin, rippling, sensually graceful, the complete sex symbol.

Which reminded me of June.

"I figured to fly to St. Louis this afternoon," I said. "You'll have to drive me to Springfield if you want the car. Al's going to meet me in St. Louis. He's got a bank lined up—in Ohio. I'll be back in a week or so. Say eight days."

I knew I'd get some kind of objection.

"Can't you take the bus to Springfield? I'm not going to be stuck on this damn mountain for a week without a car, and it's a long drive back from Springfield. You can catch the bus in Graysville." She paused, looked at the floor, then back to me, a tired sort of go-to-hell look. "Besides I may have to go to Chicago. Aunt Lucille's sick."

I wished she'd be a little more original. I didn't particularly mind wearing the horns, but she could at least put them on me with a little more finesse. I started to argue, then decided it wasn't worth it.

"All right. Drive me down to Graysville in an hour or so. The bus leaves at two and it's almost eleven now."

I put my light jacket on, stuck the last three cans of beer in the pockets, and went out to the barn. The horses and the bull-calf

came over to see what I was doing, and I caught the paint without any trouble. I put the bridle and the new saddle on him. It was easy for a change. He only tried to bite me once, and cow-kicked at me a little when I tightened the cinch. Paint's heart wasn't in it though. I rode him back to the house. The bull-calf and the quarter horse followed us to the gate and stood there watching.

I dismounted and went into the house. My .38 was in the bedroom and I had to reach across Carol to get it from under my pillow. She had the phonograph going. *Moulin Rouge*. She lifted up toward me, offering a kiss. I reached into the nightstand drawer and took some ammunition instead. I wondered what she was wondering about.

I went back out, got on the horse, and headed up the mountain. The road was dry and dusty but it wasn't hot. There was almost a smell of rain, but the clouds were moving fast. We wouldn't get any. The rain was Missouri bound.

I cut off the road and rode upward through the trees. It was even dusty in the forest. I came to my favorite spot, a small natural clearing where I could drink my beer in peace and see out over the valley. The grass was sweet and Paint liked it. I'd never brought Carol up to this place.

I drank the beer, looking over the valley and wondering how it had looked to the first white man. Forest on the sides of the lowly rolling inclines and long-grassed pastures without any dusty road winding through them. I wondered if he had been a buckskin-clad wanderer with a long Kentucky rifle, slipping through the trees as quietly as the deer, or a sweating, whip-cracking dirt farmer with a wagon load of kids and a Pittsburgh plow, looking for cheap land to carve into meticulous squares for his children and his children's children.

After I finished the beer I used the empty cans for target practice. I tried some rapid fire. Five hits out of six shots at twenty feet. It was about all I was good at.

I had just finished reading the *Bhagavad-Gita* and I wondered what advice Krishna would have had for me. I had a pretty good idea what it would be.

Paint didn't like the sound of the revolver and as soon as I quit shooting, he came over and started nudging me. He was ready to

go. I even got pushed around by my horses. I looked at the big hammerhead and wondered how a man gets to loving an animal. I guess I did a lot of wondering that morning. That's the trouble with a city boy going to the hills: he gets to asking himself questions, and it takes him a long time to find out there aren't any answers but his own.

I rode back home thinking about June. I had met June in Wichita a couple of months before. She was divorced and had two kids. She had a big, full, Jane Russell-type body and long, black hair. She also had a new Buick and an old house. I don't know who paid the down payment on them, but I sure as hell knew who was keeping them up. Me. Old, big-hearted, lovable Johnny Harrison.

The gin was almost gone when I got back to the house, but Carol was dressed and her face made up, ready to go. I changed clothes, put away my boots and got out my oxfords, traded my wide-brim hat for a snap-brim, and put on my gray flannel. I needed a shave but I decided to wait until I got to the airport.

It was an eighteen mile drive into Graysville, all dirt roads. We didn't talk much. Carol drove and I looked at the hillside farms and the stands of second-growth timber along the road. It seemed like a shorter drive than usual.

We got to the bus station at the same time the bus did. I leaned over and kissed Carol. She kissed me back, hard.

"Have I told you lately that I love you very much, Carol?"

She smiled. She was still beautiful when she smiled. "Not lately. I love you too, honey." She grabbed my hand and squeezed it. "Be careful, Johnny. I need you."

I watched the convertible pull away. I had meant it. She meant it. We were in love with each other. It would take three days to rob the bank, then I'd spend four with June. Carol would go to Chicago as soon as I was out of sight. What the hell goes wrong?

I thought about it on the plane to St. Louis. Everyone talks about love as if it were an emotion. It isn't though. It's what causes emotions. And if you love someone, you love her. She can cheat, or nag, or get ugly, or just about anything, and it doesn't make any difference. You love her. You may not like her and you may even be more comfortable with someone else, but you can't stop

loving her. Once in awhile certain people get cosmically lucky and find they're in love with a person they like, but it's not often enough to bet on it. I wished I was in love with June. We got along fine.

I called Al as soon as I arrived in St. Louis and made arrangements to meet him in Cincinnati. The bank was in Columbus. Al had spent three months casing it and it only took me a day to check his information. He'd done a good job. We took the bank shortly before noon and that night I got off the plane in Wichita. It had been raining when the plane took off, but it was dry in Kansas. I hoped it had rained down home.

I had a little over sixteen thousand on me and I had to stop off at the post office and mail most of it before I went out to June's house. I caught a cab and leaned back on the plastic cushions and thought of her long hair, black against the tile-white pillows, and how good it would be to see her, touch her, and know she was real. *There is a time to embrace . . .*

She wasn't home . . . and a time to refrain from embracing . . .

I told the baby sitter — cute kid about sixteen — to go home and I'd take care of the kids. I had bought the youngest one, Jimmy, a cowboy outfit for his seventh birthday and he insisted on putting it on. I'd told June I was a prospector and bought and sold claims for a living. For all I knew she believed it. The kids did, and I always had to tell them what the mountains and the deserts were like in Nevada. I told them of the stillness that was full of sound if you listened closely, the cries of the owls and the coyotes, and the feeling of being all clean and strong under the clear million-million starred sky. Sometimes things are trite because they're so true you can't say them any other way. I packed the kids off to bed at eleven.

There was some Budweiser in the refrigerator. I opened a quart and went back into the living room. Parked on the couch, I sipped on the beer and waited. One of the girls in the bank had been wearing a gold and jade bracelet that June would like. I figured I'd try and find her one like it the next day. Maybe we'd run in to Kansas City. I daydreamed a little about being married to June and getting a real ranch someplace where the boys could grow up strong and un-city-tainted. Might even have some more. June was still a

young woman.

I had the second quart almost finished when I heard the car pull into the driveway. I looked at my wristwatch: 2:30. I poured myself a shot of whiskey.

"Honey! Why didn't you let me know you were coming?"

She ran over to the couch and kissed me. I caught a whiff of her hair. Musky, heavy-scented. She went on babbling about when did I get in and how long could I stay, and how she had missed me. I pulled her down on the couch and kissed her some more. She had a little trick with her lower lip and her tongue.

"I missed you too, baby. I've got four days. Let's run up to KC for a few days. We might find something you'd like. Okay?"

Of course it was Okay. So I'm a mark. Some guys like dice, some like roulette.

We sent the kids off to school in the morning and June got her sister to take care of them for a couple of days. It was a nice day. June drove till we got to KC, then I took the wheel. We had taken it easy and it was after three when we got checked into the hotel. We decided to take a nap and be fresh for the night.

We went dancing. June was heavier than Carol but she was just as light on her feet. We made some of the joints—what else is there in Kansas City?—and came back to the hotel. We had the bellboy bring us some ice and Scotch and June solemnly informed him that we were celebrating our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. Our parents had belonged to a religious sect that believed in marrying children at a very early age. She also told him the sect taught that brothers and sisters made the best married couples. She almost had him convinced.

The next day we went shopping. I couldn't find a bracelet but June found a dress she liked. I bought Tom, the older boy, a .22 rifle, and Jimmy a small two-wheel bike. June bought me a dark blue tie with little gold pickaxes all over it. I bought myself a telescopic sight for my .30-30, and June helped me pick out a black lace mantilla for Carol. It would look beautiful on her blonde hair. We got back to the hotel loaded down with packages.

That afternoon we went swimming and I damn near got my legs sunburned. June looked magnificent in a white bathing suit. It was a fine afternoon. In the evening we drove out to the Starlight

Theatre and saw some movie star in a play about a virgin. We sat under the stars—just like they advertise.

The next day we started back to Wichita. We stopped at Lawrence and wandered around the KU campus pretending we were students. It was a little after four when we got back to June's. We stayed home with the kids and watched television. I made Tom promise not to use the rifle inside the city limits and Jimmy not to ride in the streets. They went to bed at ten, protesting, then June and I sat in the living room and drank beer. I looked at her while she looked at television. Thirty-three. Women like her don't get really beautiful until they're over thirty.

"You know, June, I get a little nuts about you after the fifteenth beer and this is my sixteenth. Come over here; I want to talk to you."

We didn't talk much. I gave her a few hundred for the house. She gave me the usual argument about taking my money and did the usual thing—took it.

She drove me to the airport the next morning, and as I kissed her good-bye, I told her I'd be back in a month or so. Maybe we could go to Mexico for a week, see Xochimilco. She liked the idea so we parted feeling good.

I was looking forward to seeing Carol. I hoped she would like the mantilla.

It was raining a little when the plane landed in Springfield, but by the time I got the bus for Graysville it was over. There wasn't a sign of rain after we crossed the Arkansas line. I borrowed a pick-up truck from the Willys dealer—he expected to sell me a new station wagon when they came out—and drove the eighteen miles to home. I was a day early. Carol wasn't there.

I was putting the telescopic sight on my Marlin and listening to some jazz on the radio when the news came on. This far away it was only good for a couple of lines.

"... Chicago. Police and FBI agents today arrested an ex-convict, Alfred Sonntag, for the robbery of the Consumer's State Bank of Columbus, Ohio. Police said Sonntag had given them the name of his accomplice, but withheld it pending his capture."

It wouldn't take them long to find out where I lived. Well, I'd had five good years, more than most guys can manage. I tried real

hard to feel something. I couldn't at first, then I realized I did feel something—relief. It had been a hard, dry chase and now the coon was treed. If I surrendered, I could probably cop a plea and get off with twenty years. I'd be about fifty when I got out. Not really old. I shrugged . . . *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest . . .* I finished putting the sight on the Marlin, then went out and zeroed it in for two hundred yards.

It was getting dark and a few clouds were beginning to show up. We were going to get some rain. I wondered who'd get here first. As soon as it got really dark, I went to bed. The law never comes after a man in the hills after dark.

I got up before dawn, fixed myself some eggs and beer, and ate. I went out to the barn and fed the horses. It was just getting light when the first drops started falling. In ten minutes it was raining harder than I had seen it rain since I was a kid selling papers on the corner of Halsted and Division. The horses and the bull-calf had gone into the barn and the pond was already a quarter full and filling fast. The water ran off the roof in streams six inches wide. I stood on the porch with the rifle in my hand and watched the rain hit the road where it curved by the lower pasture. I half-wished Carol were here to see it. It had been dry for a long time.

CONTACT is published quarterly by ANGEL ISLAND PUBLICATIONS, INC. from Bridgeway and Johnson Streets, Sausalito, California and entered for second-class mailing at Sausalito, California. Publisher and Editor: William H. Ryan, 307 Third St., Sausalito, Calif.; Managing Editor: Barbara Turner, 109 Bulkley Avenue, Sausalito, Calif.; Business Manager: James Prior, Box 433, Sausalito, Calif. Stockholders of more than 1% of total stock in corporation: William H. Ryan, 307 Third St., Sausalito, Calif.; Calvin Kentfield, 885 Bridgeway, Sausalito, Calif.; Barbara Turner, 109 Bulkley, Sausalito, Calif.; Robert Peterson, 506 Pine, Sausalito, Calif.; Mortimer Herzstein, 41 Sutter, San Francisco, Calif.; William Roth, 215 Market St., San Francisco, Calif.; Margaret MacLeod, 596 Sausalito, Calif.; Mr. & Mrs. George Dorsey, 29A Edwards St., Sausalito, Calif. Average circulation 8,500.

Philip Levine

THE NEGATIVES

On March 3, 1958 four deserters from the French Army of North Africa, August Rein, Thomas Delain, Jack Dauville, and Henri Bruette, robbed a government pay-station at Orleansville. Because of the subsequent confession of Dauville the other three were captured or shot. Dauville was given his freedom and allowed to return to the USA, where he had grown up.

AUGUST REIN: from a last camp near St. Remy

I dig in the soft earth all
afternoon, spacing the holes
a foot or so from the wall.
Tonight we eat potatoes,
tomorrow rice and carrots.
The earth here is like the earth
nowhere, ancient with wood rot.
How can anything come forth,

I wonder; and the days are
all alike, if there is more
than one day. If there is more
of this I will not endure.
I have grown so used to being
watched I can no longer sleep
without my watcher. The thing
I fought against, the dark cape

crimsoned with terror that
I so hated comforts me now.
Thomas is dead; insanity,
prison, cowardice, or slow
inner capitulation
has found us all, and all men
turn from us, knowing our pain
is not theirs or caused by them.

HENRI BRUETTE: from a hospital in Algiers

Dear Suzanne: this letter will
not reach you because I can't
write it; I have no pencil,
no paper, only the blunt
end of my anger. My dear,
if I had words how could I
report the imperfect failure
for which I began to die?

I might begin by saying
that it was for clarity,
though I did not find it in
terror: dubiously
I entered each act, unsure
of who I was or what I
did, touching my face for fear
I was another: inside

my head I played back pictures
of my childhood, of my wife
even, for it was in her
I found myself beaten, safe,
and furthest from the present.
It is her face I see now
though all I say is meant
for you, her face in the slow

agony of sexual
release. I cannot see you.
The dark wall ribbed with spittle
on which I play my childhood
brings me to this bed, mastered
by what I was, betrayed by
those I trusted. The one word
my mouth must open to is *why*.

JACK DAUVILLE: from a hotel in Tampa, Florida

From Orleansville we drove
south until we reached the hills,
 then east until
the road stopped. I was nervous
and couldn't eat. Thomas took
over, told us when to think
 and when to shit.
We turned north and reached Blida
by first dawn and the city
by morning, having dumped our
weapons beside an empty
 road. We were free.

We parted, and to this hour
I haven't seen them, except
in photographs: the black hair
and torn features
of Thomas Delain captured
a moment before his death

on the pages of the world,
smeared in the act. I tortured
myself with their
betrayal: alone I hurled
them into freedom, inner
freedom which I can't find
nor ever will
until they are dead. In my mind
Delain stands against the wall

precise in detail, steadied
for the betrayal. "La France
C'est Moi," he cried,
but the irony was lost. Since
I returned to the US
nothing goes well. I stay up
too late, don't sleep,
and am losing weight. Thomas,
I say, is dead, but what use

telling myself what I won't
believe. The hotel quiets
early at night,
the aged brace themselves for
another sleep, and offshore
the sea quickens its pace. I
am suddenly
old, caught in a strange country
for which no man would die.

THOMAS DELAIN: from a journal found on his person

At night wakened by the freight
trains boring through the suburbs
of Lyon, I watched first light
corrode the darkness, disturb
what little wildlife was left
in the alleys: birds moved from
branch to branch, and the dogs leapt
at the garbage. Winter numbed
even the hearts of the young
who had only their hearts. We
heard the war coming; the long
wait was over, and we moved
along the crowded roads south
not looking for what lost loves
fell in the ditches. To flee
at all cost: that was my youth.

Here in the African night
wakened by what I do not
know and shivering in the heat,
I listen as the men fight
with sleep. Loosed from their weapons
they cry out, frightened and young,
who have never been children.
Once merely to be strong,
to live, was moral. Within
these uniforms we become
the evil we were chosen
to deliver, and no act
human or benign can free
us from ourselves. Wait, sleep, blind
soldiers of a blind will, and
listen for that old command
dreaming of authority.

'The life of every man is a diary in which he means to write one story, and writes another, and his humblest hour is when he compares the volume as it is with what he vowed to make it.'

—J. M. BARRIE

WHEN YOU GO to Federal prison you spend the first month in quarantine, segregated from the rest of the population and subjected to a battery of tests designed to evaluate your health, intelligence, achievement, personality and aptitude for work (for you will work eight hours a day). They fill you with shots to protect you from disease and if your teeth need fixing they will fix them free; if you need dentures you will get them—or eyeglasses, or a wooden leg.

And one of the first custodial officials you meet is called the parole officer because you will apply for parole at the end of a third of your sentence. It is one of his jobs to help you to apply, to advise you, and to see that you have a parole advisor and an employer back home—in case you make it.

In the Federal Correctional Institution in Texarkana, Texas, where I served a year's sentence in 1950-1951 for a misdemeanor called Contempt of Congress, there were two such officials. The one I drew was reasonably intelligent, if not widely educated; and reasonably *simpatico*, if unutterably bored.

At my first interview he said, "This is the point where I get *your* side of the story. Why do you think you're here? Before you start, let me tell you that in twenty years of custodial work I have yet to

Alvah Bessie

THE NON-EXISTENT MAN

meet an inmate who isn't here on a bum rap."

"Sir," I said (all officers are sir), "in my opinion, I'm a political prisoner."

"Bessie," he said with a perfectly dead pan, "we don't have any political prisoners in the U.S.A." He glanced at my dossier (which is called a jacket) and said, "You're here for violation of Section 192, Title 2, U.S. Code, which means refusal to testify before a duly constituted committee of Congress."

Neither I nor the nine other writers, directors and producers who were later called the Hollywood Ten* had exactly refused to testify before the House Committee on Un-American Activities when, in 1947, it "probed" the motion-picture industry for evidence of Communist infiltration. We had been more than willing to talk, but the Committee was not interested in the sort of testimony we were anxious to adduce. Our point was that the Committee itself was unconstitutional since it could not legislate in the field of ideas, opinions or associations.** So we had individually

* Herbert Biberman, Lester Cole, Edward Dmytryk, Ring Lardner Jr., John Howard Lawson, Albert Maltz, Samuel Ornitz, Adrian Scott, Dalton Trumbo, and myself.

** First Amendment: *Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging*

refused to answer the only questions that the Committee cared to ask, questions to which, incidentally, it claimed to have the answers in advance: What were our trade-union affiliations?* What were our political affiliations?

Some of the original nineteen** who were subpoenaed could have said: "Sure, I belong to the Screen Writers' Guild—" or "I belong to the Communist party—so what?" Or some of them could have said, "No, I don't, and what the hell do *you* care?"***

But we had decided to challenge, for the first time, the very basis of the Committee's existence, the validity of its mandate; so an answer, either way, would have been an answer to an impertinent question. That was all they wanted, of course, for us to say, "Yes," so they could say, "Just like we said, the Reds are infiltrating the Industry. Who are the *others*?" Or they wanted us to say, "No, we are not," so they could produce a witness who would swear that we lied. Perjury is a crime worth five years, while Contempt of Congress carries a maximum of one; and nobody in history, that we could discover, had ever been jailed for that misdemeanor.

Dalton Trumbo and Jack Lawson became the first. Once they had been tried and sent to prison, the rest of the Ten, having waived jury trial, were brought to court and disposed of in an hour and a half by three judges. Two of them threw the book at us, but the other one took a lighter view and gave Herbert Biberman and Edward Dmytryk****—both directors—six months each and five hundred dollars in fines.

Since we had landed in the clink by arguing our point with the Committee and with the judges, in spite of a number of resounding Supreme Court decisions in parallel cases that bolstered

the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

* i.e. Were we members of the Screen Writers' Guild which the Committee asserted was Communist controlled?

** Of this number, eleven got the chance to testify. The late German dramatist Bertolt Brecht upheld our contentions before the Committee, but, being an alien, he was forced to disassociate himself from our position and was not cited for contempt.

*** Ring Lardner Jr. put it best of all when he said: "I could answer it, but if I did, I would hate myself in the morning."

**** After three months in prison, Dmytryk had a visit from his wife and his attorney. He told Maltz that he was never going to jail again—*never*. He issued a statement to the effect that he had been misled. His country

our contention, I saw no particular point in my arguing it with my parole officer.

So, I was not a political prisoner because there were none in the U.S.A., but neither was I a criminal—as many of my fellow convicts pointed out. *They* were criminals; they had stolen cars, transported women across State lines for immoral purposes, possessed or sold narcotics, bootlegged liquor, passed phony money, evaded income tax, forged Government checks, held up the U.S. mail, or sneaked in from Mexico under cover of night to look for work.

But I baffled them. One of them said to me, "I don't get you, brother. You're not a criminal like me. You're here for some ideas you got. Is that right?"

"I think so," I said.

"O.K., I want to ask you a question, only first I want you to know what kind of a guy I am. I'm a junkie and a pimp, see. I got five girls hustling right now, so when I get out I'll have plenty in the bank and a Fleetwood Caddy and I can lay around the best hotel in Denver and have me a ball, see, only here's the point. I'm for *me*, see. Nobody else."

"So what's the question?" I said.

"You got a wife and a little girl, right?"

I nodded.

"It's easier for you in here pulling time than for them outside. They're living on charity, right?"

"They're living on money raised by a committee," I said. "By

was at war (Korea), and his country right or wrong. This did not shorten his sentence as he might have hoped; but the moment he was sprung, he made a separate peace with the Committee and the FBI. Promptly, in the Saturday Evening Post, there appeared an article written by a screen-writer named Richard English. It was entitled *The Rehabilitation of Edward Dmytryk*, and in it Eddie, stung by our accusation that he was a stool pigeon, came up with the formulation which he has since used many times, that he had looked up the word and found that it meant a former criminal who aids the forces of law and order by informing on the continuing criminal activities of his former associates. "Nobody," said Dmytryk, "informs on the Boy Scouts."

Then he leapt full-grown, as it were, from the head of J. Edgar Hoover into the status of an authority on the Red Menace, equipped to lecture before all sorts of organizations despite the fact that he had, by his own admission, belonged to the Communist Party for only six months, attending, perhaps, two meetings. He also plopped, belly-first, back into the Industry to direct a number of miserable films including *The Young Lions* and a remake of *The Blue Angel*.

the time my case was lost, I was broke."

"Yeah, O.K., so what right you got to make your old lady suffer for a thing like this? That's what I want to know."

"My wife agrees with my ideas," I said, "and with what I did."

"So what about the kid? She don't know nothing but her Daddy's took away, right? So what right you got to do this to the kid? That's what I want to know."

I could not answer him in any terms that he could understand. Nor could I have explained to any non-political person the reasons for what had happened—and continues to happen—to me and to thousands of others throughout America who have been victimized by the Committee.

When I first entered the institution, I was afraid of the convicts, for it was reasonable to assume that there would be a lot of patriotic prisoners in a U.S. jail; and the Committee had stigmatized us from border to border as subversives and traitors (one Congressman had called Albert Maltz a colonel in the Red Army). But the men did not hate me. Being anti-social birds, anyone the Government was *against*, they were for—especially if he had refused to sing.

And it wasn't a bad place. It wasn't as oppressive, I was told, as the "big tops," or the Washington District Jail, or the county jails in Roanoke and Nashville. (The last two places accommodated Biberman and me overnight on our three-day, eighty-mile-an-hour tour in a 1950 Mercury from Washington to Texas.) It looked like a modern high school. Each cell block, holding twenty men, was locked, but the cell doors were not; and I was lucky enough to have a room of my own. It was prison policy to have older men in individual cells rather than in the dorms. That might have been the reason they put me there, or it might have been that they didn't want me talking to the other inmates (if that was the reason, it didn't work), or it might have been—in view of the fact that a lawyer friend of mine landed in the same cell some years later—that the cell was, as I always suspected, bugged.

All work was done by the inmates, but since there were more inmates than jobs, most of the white men goldbricked while the Mexicans and Negroes did the heavy work on the prison farm.

For three months I had a lovely job driving a truck. I carried

the "farmers" to work, occasionally hauling fertilizer and crops while I waited to carry them back. Most of my time I spent parked under a tree reading *Life on the Mississippi* and other books from the prison library including an *Anthology of World Prose* which contained an article called *Class Struggles*—the first section, of course, of the *Communist Manifesto*.

Working conditions were not conducive to any extended piece of creative work, but I wrote a number of poems which, in the warden's absence, got me into trouble with the captain who found them derogatory to the institution. When the warden returned, he gave them back saying that he had not found them derogatory to the institution, merely to the entire prison system.

There was no interest in rehabilitation, he told me. Eighty percent of the prisoners would be back, sooner or later, after their release. Most of them were very young, with wretched pasts and hopeless futures, with no skills. They were there for a variety of dismal reasons, but the majority of men in my cell block were narcotic addicts, and so, to support the habit, were thieves and pimps as well. They were the saddest of the lot, for in spite of the fact that most of them had been taken off the habit cold turkey and had been "clean" for anywhere up to three years, they had only one direction and one purpose after they had been "dressed out" in a cheap suit, cheap linen, a pair of shoes, ten bucks and a bus ticket home: to find a fix.

"It's all in the mind," one of them told me.

As a handful of film geniuses from Chaplin to Giulietta Masina have demonstrated, great comedy and tragedy are inseparable. The Hollywood investigation was at once a farce and a tragedy. It was a farce because of the kind of assistance that the Committee refused* and because of the nature of the testimony that the Committee, lavishing praise upon friendly witnesses, solicited and eagerly accepted. Examples:

—GARY COOPER, pressed to name some of the scripts submitted to

* The producers offered to screen any American picture ever made and let the Committee point out subversion. The offer was refused. Dalton Trumbo offered to put in the record twenty screenplays he had written. "May I ask how long one of these scripts may be?" said the chairman. "They average from a hundred and fifteen to a hundred and sixty or seventy pages," Trumbo said. "... Too many pages," said the chairman.

him, "quite a few" of which he had turned down because they were "tinged with Communistic ideas", replied that he couldn't remember any "... because most of the scripts I read at night."

—AYN RAND, who said she had escaped from the U.S.S.R., claimed that *Song of Russia* (MGM) was Red propaganda because, among other equally cogent reasons, "There is a park where you see happy little children in white blouses running around..." She said she had never seen such children around the time she escaped (1926) and when asked, "Doesn't anybody smile in Russia any more?" she replied, "Well... pretty much no." Questioned again about her escape, she switched her story. "No... strangely enough they gave me a passport to come out here as a visitor."

—ADOLPHE MENJOU, modestly admitting he was an authority on Marxism and had published a list of thirty-five books that everyone should read, was questioned by Richard M. Nixon (Rep., Calif.):

Nixon—"Have you any other tests which you would apply which would indicate to you that people are acting like Communists?"

Menjou—"Well, I think attending any meetings at which Mr. Paul Robeson appeared and applauding or listening to his Communist songs in America, I would be ashamed to be seen in an audience doing that kind of thing."

—JAMES K. MCGUINNESS, MGM executive, was asked if he knew "who Alvah Bessie is?" He said, yes.

Smith (investigator)—"Who is he?"

McGuinness—"He was known amongst writers I knew on the Warner Brothers lot as the Party's hatchet man."

—JACK MOFFITT, a motion picture critic for *Esquire* and a screenwriter, pressed to give examples of party-line work in films said: "... the minister will be shown as the tool of his richest parishioner... * the returned soldier feel(s) that the world is against him, that business is against him... You will see picture after picture in which the banker is presented as an unsympathetic man, who hates to give a GI a loan..."**

* This would apply to *Pollyanna*.

** He was referring to *The Best Years of Our Lives* which William Wyler,

—MRS. LELA ROGERS, Ginger's mother, omitted any reference to a film written by Trumbo called *Tender Comrade* (the title is from Tennyson) which she had attacked earlier as Communistic because her daughter was forced to say, "Share and share alike, that's democracy." But she did attack *None but the Lonely Heart*, written and directed by Clifford Odets. It was Red propaganda, she said, for many reasons, among them being the fact that the *Hollywood Reporter* had said that it was "pitched in a low key, is moody and somber throughout in the Russian manner."

"We (she and Ginger) turned down *Sister Carrie* by Theodore Dreiser," she said, "because it was just as open propaganda as *None but the Lonely Heart*."

Similar testimony was accepted, and elaborately praised, from the late Sam Wood* (director), Morrie Ryskind, Fred Niblo Jr., and Richard Macauley (writers), Leo McCarey (director-producer), Rupert Hughes (writer) and Robert Montgomery, George Murphy and Ronald Reagan (actors).

But the high comedy came a little later, out of the mouth and activities of the Chairman, J. Parnell Thomas (Rep., N.J.),** who sat through the hearings elevated upon a red silk cushion and a District of Columbia telephone book so the cameras could focus on him.

Having expressed livid indignation that anyone would be so dishonest as to create motion-picture characters who were venal judges, stingy bankers and corrupt Congressmen in order (as friendly witnesses proclaimed) to downgrade the American way-of-life, Mr. Thomas found himself in prison before any of the Ten ever got there. Exposed by Drew Pearson and brought to trial, Thomas pleaded *nolo contendere* to charges of having put some of his relatives on the public payroll and permitting them to kick back to his personal bank account. He was sent to the Federal Correctional Institution in Danbury, Connecticut, where he later enjoyed the company of Lester Cole and Ring Lardner Jr.

its director, later said he could not make "today"—thanks to the activities of the Committee.

* Mr. Wood's will forbade his daughter, actress K. T. Stevens, from receiving her inheritance until she had signed a non-Communist affidavit.

** His name, originally, was Feeney—J. Parnell Feeney. It must have embarrassed him because he changed it. At the same time he retained Parnell, unaware, apparently, of its revolutionary overtones.

Though his sentence was for eighteen months, only eight of them passed before he made parole and President Truman (Dem., Mo.), as one of his last acts in office, granted him full pardon along with two other solons who had done nothing, really, but pile up a little loot during the war by peddling their influence to munitions makers.*

The tragedy that eventuated from the Hollywood investigation is more difficult to evaluate. As a result of it and subsequent investigations, several hundred film writers, directors, producers, actors, story editors and back-lot workers found themselves without employment, smeared with the Red brush and reduced to pariahs in their communities.

There is no way of knowing how much actual money—an accepted status-symbol in our society—was lost by these people as a result of having to find jobs for which they were not suited, when many of them had for decades performed ably, and sometimes brilliantly, in their respective crafts.

Personally, I know of at least fifteen broken marriages, broken because husband or wife either became an informer or refused to, and as many untimely deaths and suicides that may be traced directly or indirectly to the over-all activities of this Committee.

But it is impossible to equate in terms of either hard cash or personal disorientation what it means to be skidded out of the economic system on your backside, not because of anything you have ever done, but because you have been persecuted for accepting (or being said to accept) ideas which, as the late Thomas Mann put it, are "the creation of great minds and great thinkers..."

Speaking on a nation-wide broadcast at the time of the investigation, Mann said: "I have the honor to expose myself as a hostile witness. I testify that I am very much interested in the

* None of the Ten made parole. The parole judge who visited my institution interviewed the average prisoner for about ten minutes. He interviewed Biberman and me for well over an hour. He was enormously intelligent, courteous, fascinated by the way movies were made and the relationship of the writer and director to the medium; but the verdict was always the same, presumably because we showed no signs of rehabilitation—we continued to maintain that we were right—and in spite of petitions to the parole board signed by thousands of citizens, and hundreds of individual letters.

moving-picture industry and that, since my arrival in the United States nine years ago, I've seen a great many Hollywood films. If Communist propaganda had been smuggled into any of them, it must have been most thoroughly hidden. I, for one, never noticed anything of the sort . . . As an American citizen of German birth, I finally testify that I am painfully familiar with certain political trends. Spiritual intolerance, political inquisitions, and declining legal security, and all this in the name of an alleged 'state of emergency' . . . that is how it started in Germany. What followed was fascism and what followed fascism was war."

After the investigation, when the producers who had momentarily bucked the Committee were arraigned at the Waldorf-Astoria by the men who really owned the Industry, they announced their policy: they would fire us all and they would not rehire us until we had purged ourselves of Contempt of Congress or sworn that we were not Communists. Yet the moment I got back to Hollywood from the investigation in Washington, I was offered an assignment by the same producer who made a film from a script I had just finished before I was subpoenaed.

He said my situation was a shame and a disgrace, but that I should not worry; he would find me as much work as I could do. And he did. But, unfortunately, he could no longer pay me six hundred a week, my "established" salary. He could only pay three hundred. The pressure to complete the job was inexorable, and the next job, which came at two hundred, had to be done even faster. What the hell, it was only a polish job. Then I found myself doing another polish job that turned into a completely new story and screenplay—in four days. He promised me four hundred. Then I discovered that he had gone to his boss and allegedly said, "We're in trouble on this script, but I know where I can pick up a piece of material that will lick it."

"How much?" said the boss.

"Only a grand."

He got the grand, paid me the four hundred, and what became of the rest—I don't know.

After my release from Texarkana in 1951, it was impossible to find work at all. I searched Los Angeles for three months. I

wrote all the New York publishers who might be sympathetic, but there were no replies. I wrote to every trade union that might be inclined to hire me; three of them replied sympathetically but had no openings.

A rich machine-tool manufacturer offered to hire me as an apprentice lathe operator at \$1.50 an hour—if I would sign a loyalty oath. He was astounded when I refused. “Why not?” he said. “It’s all over. You’ve paid your debt to society.”

A man I did not know called and told me I could make one to two hundred dollars a week selling the Encyclopedia Britannica, so I went out with him for two days and watched and listened while he made no sales at all and called—not on middle-class people who presumably had the money, but on the poorest Mexican-American workers in Pacoima and San Fernando. “They’re starving for culture,” he told me. He also suggested that if he was to recommend me to his crew-chief, maybe I had better take another name.

Another man I did not know offered to start me as an insurance salesman but on further consideration decided that the state might not license me “with your record.”

Another contact considered hiring me to sell British motor cars, and for two days I indulged a fantasy that saw me tooling around in a Jag or a Rolls, selling right and left to movie stars I knew—until he decided that I might be bad for public relations.

Then Harry Bridges, a great man who has never been forgiven by the powers-that-be for his leadership of the 1934 strike, picked me up and brought me to San Francisco as his second-string mouthpiece and editor of the International Longshoremen’s and Warehousemen’s Union. The job gave me an astonishing sense of immunity from further harassment in spite of one invitation from Senator Eastland (Dem., Miss.) to appear before his own committee. That time I had the good sense to invoke the Fifth Amendment instead of the First.*

During the five years that I worked for the ILWU, I put

* One of the major Supreme Court decisions on which the Ten relied (*W. Virginia v. Barnett*, 1943) reads in part: “If there is one fixed star in our Constitutional constellation, it is that no official, high or petty, can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion or other matters of opinion or force citizens to confess by word or act their

together an anthology of writing on the Spanish War called *The Heart of Spain* and managed to complete a novel. The anthology contained the work of ninety authors such as Dorothy Parker, Heywood Broun, Louis Aragon, Paul Eluard, Lillian Hellman, Garcia Lorca, Herbert Matthews of the New York Times, Ilya Ehrenburg of Moscow and Pablo Neruda of Chile.

Nevertheless, I could not find a commercial publisher for it.* The same was true of the novel, *The un-Americans*. In it I attempted, in terms of human character, to examine the personality and motivations of a political liberal who becomes an informer, to attack the Committee and political conformity, and to put down for the first time in an American novel a real live witch—a Communist. I wrote the book in 1954 and, finally, in 1957 it was published by Angus Cameron.** The only major review it received was in the New York Times and was headed "Apologist for Tyranny." Two-thirds of the space reviewed my career and the other third arrived at the conclusion that it was difficult to believe that the book had been written by a sane man.***

In 1956 the ILWU was forced to reduce its international staff and I was let out. I went looking for work again, but five years had changed nothing and I repeated my experiences of 1951 when I was released from prison. The newspapers to whom I had talked daily for five years on the ILWU's phone would not talk to me in their offices. The advertising and publicity people

faith therein." By simply refusing to review the case the Supreme Court side-stepped the issue and automatically upheld the convictions. Fourteen years later, in dismissing an indictment against John T. Watkins, United Automobile Workers organizer, the Supreme Court upheld his right to invoke the First Amendment in unequivocal terms. But after the Court's refusal to review the Ten in 1950, a majority of witnesses were forced to rely on the Fifth Amendment which prohibits a citizen from becoming a witness against himself—and thus escaped imprisonment.

* The Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade finally published it and sold four thousand copies by subscription.

** In my opinion Cameron is the finest editor in the U.S.A. For many years he was editor-in-chief at Little, Brown. After appearing as a witness before the Committee, he was asked to resign. He started his own firm, first with Albert Kahn and next with Carl Marzani. He is now an editor at Alfred A. Knopf.

*** The novel sold badly in America, (of course), but it has done much better in England, Germany and South America. It will shortly appear in Czechoslovakia and other unmentionable countries.

that I sought for jobs were either unavailable for interviews or they passed the buck with their accustomed finesse.*

Similar experiences could be reported by any of the original Ten, and worse by the hundreds of other motion-picture workers who followed us with less fanfare into non-existence. And the whole thing would be immensely funny if it weren't so outrageous. The idea that any worker in film could "slip" anything into a motion-picture script unnoticed by the studio is an absurdity.

Yet, the blacklisted film actors have never returned to the screen. A few have managed to work their way back onto the Broadway stage and into television, but scores of literary and dramatic artists are now indifferent salesmen of real estate, cosmetics, ladies' lingerie, insurance and building materials. Some of them have gone to Europe, but few have made it in film there.

However, in the last two years, it has seemed that the blacklist—whose existence the producers have always denied—was on its way out. Last year the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences rescinded its inane bylaw that precluded the nomination of anyone who had refused to cooperate with the Committee. By that time it was common knowledge that writers on the list had been responsible for such films as *Friendly Persuasion* (Michael Wilson) which had been denied nomination for an Oscar under the bylaw; *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (Wilson—Carl Foreman); *The Brave One* ("Robert Rich"); *The Defiant Ones* ("Nathan E. Douglas") and others of like stature. Following the revelation that Ned Young was the "Nathan E. Douglas" who, with his co-author Harold Jacob Smith, had won the Oscar in 1958 for *The Defiant Ones*, Dalton Trumbo admitted that he was the "Robert Rich" who had not appeared to claim his award for *The Brave One*. He also revealed, on June 15th this year, in a front-page interview in *Variety* that he had written thirty screenplays for money in the thirteen years since the axe fell. He said:

* One sympathetic fellow offered to put me in touch with a friend of his in Hollywood who was then, as now, "in charge" of getting people cleared. "You could be back to work in a week," he said. The friend was a well-known screenwriter who had earned his honorary job by naming more "Communists" than anyone else who ever appeared before the Committee. He named one hundred and fifty-seven!

"Everybody used to say: 'Why don't you spill everything and end all this trouble?' I haven't heard that recently. As a matter of fact, it hasn't happened in quite a while."

Earlier in the year, Otto Preminger publicly announced the hiring of Trumbo to do the screenplay from Leon Uris' *Exodus*; and on August 8 the *New York Times* broke the news that he was also the writer of the forthcoming film version of Howard Fast's *Spartacus* and that he would receive solo credit on the screen.

Trumbo's success, along with Wilson's, in beating the blacklist is due, of course, to obvious reasons: they had big credits and big reputations long before 1947, and they are probably the best screenwriters that Hollywood had ever developed. The bulk of the blacklist do not have their credits or prestige—or their talents—and so remain non-existent in their former fields. And their cause has undoubtedly been set back a couple of years by a *contretemps* involving Frank Sinatra who announced the hiring of Maltz to write the screenplay for William Bradford Huie's *The Execution of Private Slovik*. Frankie, apparently, made several miscalculations. He chose a book about the only American who was executed as a deserter in World War II; he announced the hiring of Maltz before the film was in work and he forgot for a moment that as an entertainer he is far more vulnerable than a producer or director.

The attack upon him was swift and relentless and within a few weeks he knuckled under to pressure from Hedda Hopper, the Hearst press, the American Legion, and—so the rumor goes—the Jack Kennedy machine. "... the American public," Sinatra said, "has indicated it feels the morality of hiring Albert Maltz is the more crucial matter*, and I will accept this majority opinion."**

In the depths of the Drepression I was approached to write an article to be called *Extenuations of Sudden Poverty*. Being in my twenties and rather naive (or perhaps, without knowing it, I was a budding subversive), I indignantly refused the assignment. With some cogency I stated that I saw no extenuations in poverty, sudden or gradual. But I am older now.

For there are many gratifications to be found in non-existence.

* More crucial than Maltz's "pro-American approach to the story."

** The decisive pressure, it is said, came from the Pentagon itself, which unequivocally told Frankie's representatives that it did not want the film made—period.

For one: in my last interview before leaving Texarkana, my parole officer said, "Bessie, I have read your testimony and the others'; I've looked up the Supreme Court decisions in similar cases and I've studied a lot of American history since you came here. And I want to tell you this—I understand you're some kind of radical and I don't hold with such ideas, but from what I understand of the American democratic tradition, you *are* here on a bum rap."

For another: ever since I rejected the idea (at 20) that if I could not write a novel as good as *War and Peace* there would be no point in my writing at all, I have been compelled to put words on paper. So, there are two screenplays on the market in Hollywood under a respectable name that may or may not sell; there are three TV scripts; there is a novel in the works; there is a recent offer to write a screenplay about a celebrated radical who has been safely dead for thirty-four years; and there is my job in a San Francisco night club.

I have been in and around the theater all my life; I like and understand show people and get along with them. My boss is kind and doesn't give a hoot in hell what I believe in or what I've done in the past.

In this gin mill where I am employed as a sort of combination stage manager, light man and off-stage voice, not a night passes but some lush in the showroom applauds loudly when I come on stage to adjust the mike. Not a week passes but someone at the bar says, "Aren't you Sir Cedric Hardwicke?" And for four years I have scrupulously denied it. But last month a man said, "Your face is familiar."

"Cedric Hardwicke," I said, not even taking the trouble to exercise my rusty British accent.

The fellow reached in his pocket for pen and paper, then thought better of it. He said, "Are you up here to make a movie?"

"Just the weekend," I replied.

"I've enjoyed your pictures so much."

"Thank you," I said.

He bought his ticket and went into the showroom and I've been wondering ever since what he felt when I came out on the stage between the acts with the comedian's props, laid them on the piano and raised the mike to the right height.



ART OF THE IMPRISONED

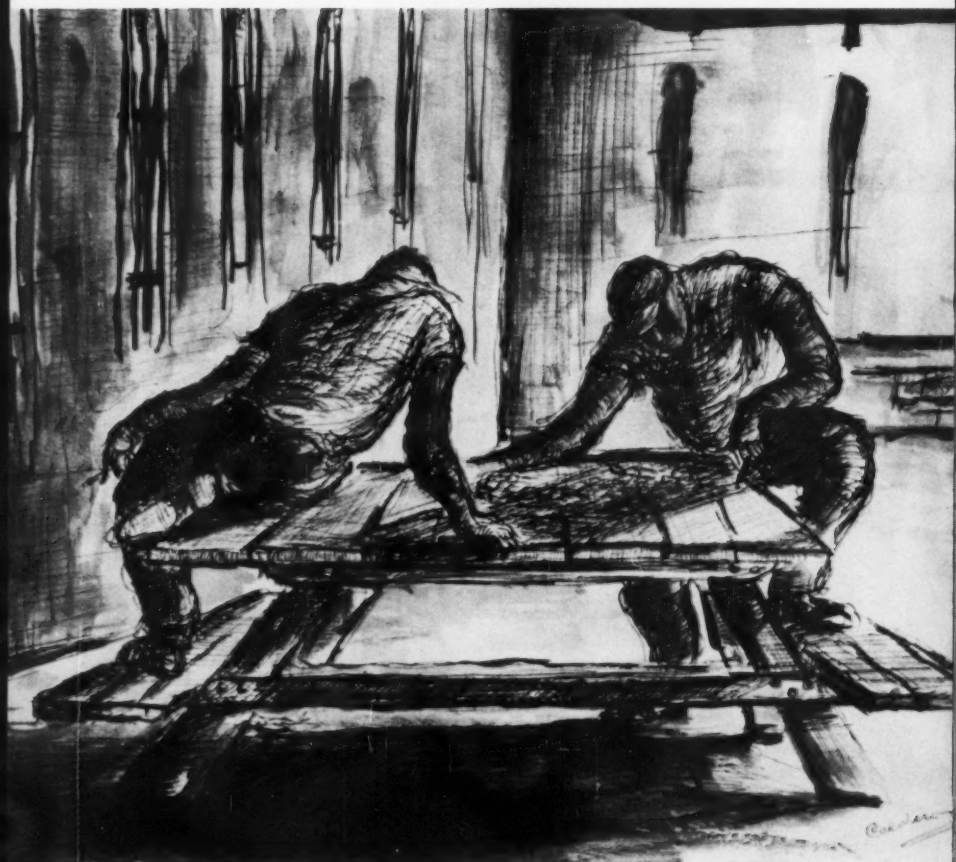
This portfolio was selected from nearly eight hundred paintings and drawings viewed by the editors at Folsom and San Quentin state prisons in California. We thank the custodians of these institutions for their cooperation. Reproductions from Photos by John Hendricks.







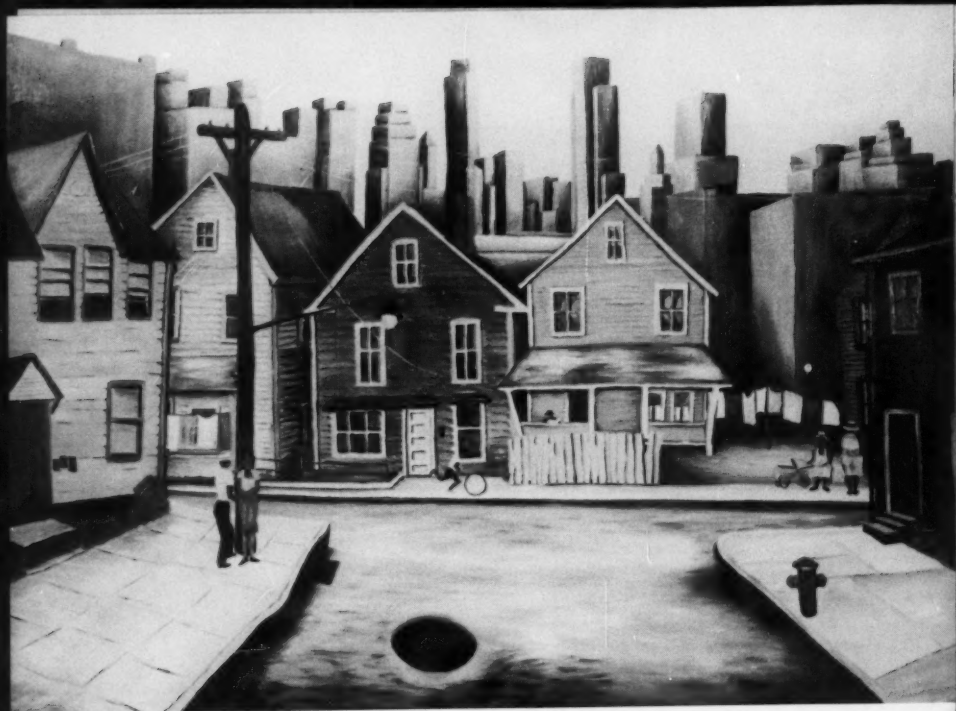


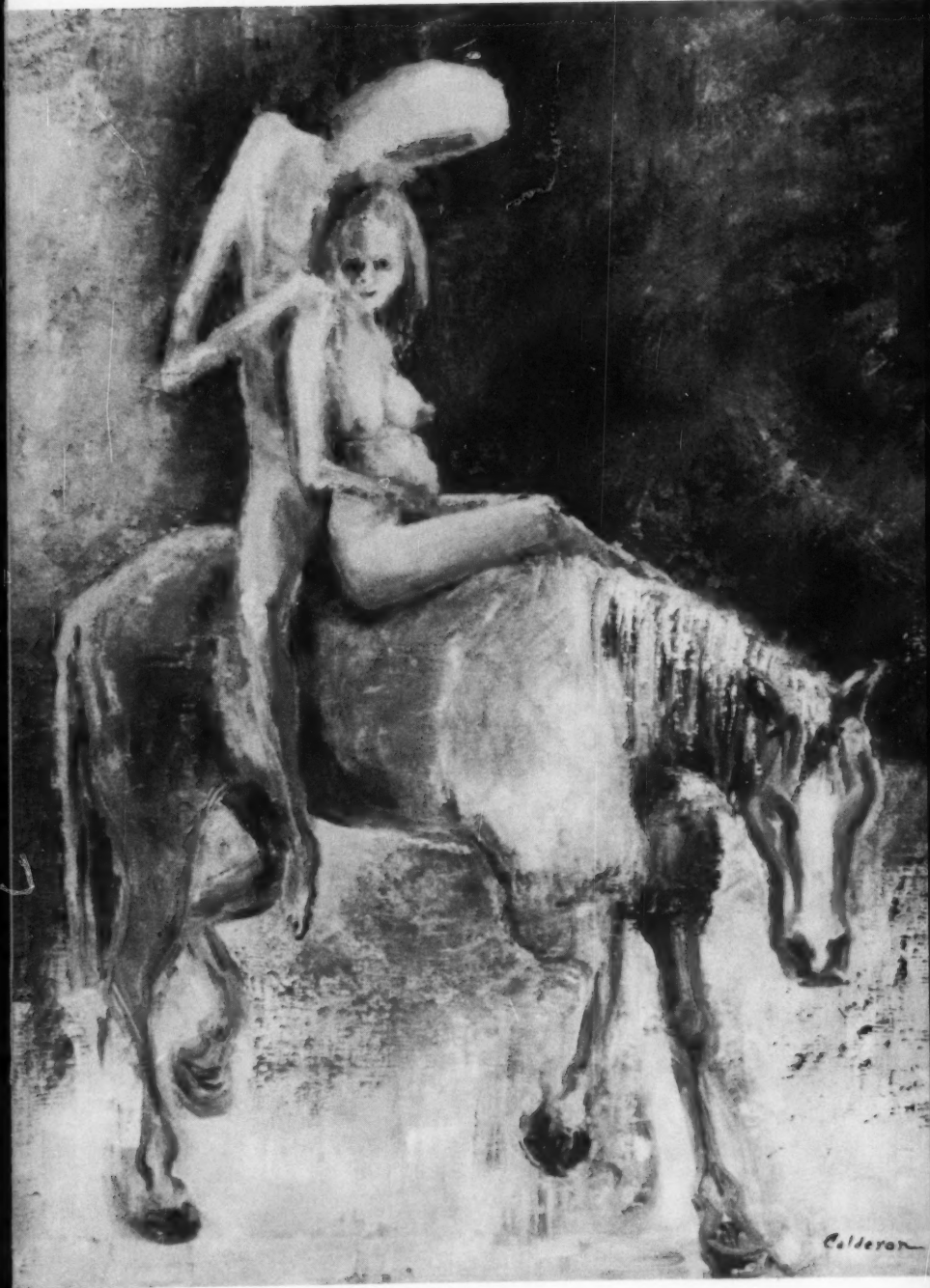
















Handwritten text in Korean script, likely a family record or genealogy, written in ink on a dark background. The text is arranged in several lines, some of which are underlined. The script is somewhat cursive and includes numbers and names. The text is located to the right of the photograph of the girl.





6.36.9.60

James Schevill

THE IMAGES OF EXECUTION

On May 2, 1960, Caryl Chessman was executed at
San Quentin.

"Neither in the hearts of men nor in the manners of
society will there be a lasting peace until we
outlaw death."

Albert Camus

I

Unseen world of radiation,
Charged with atomic particles
That break around magnetic fields

Of planets like waves on a promontory;
Ocean of fury, foaming, seething,
With currents of energy

That flare in deadly storms
From the fatal, burning sun
And billions of other stars;

Tumultuous ocean of space,
The solar cosmic rays
Blast out from the sun

In huge flares every few years;
So the force of murder, the state
Against man, man against the state.

II

Black, the hearse speeds out of San Quentin, black,
Red glow the fires of cremation, red,
White lie the ashes of the end, white.
Sin and no redemption, sin and execution.
Redemption, the quality of the new leaf
Bursting in green through the green chamber,
Unswerving flight of birds through arching spring
As hands tend flowers for the grace of change.
We count the years and lose; no dates redeem,
But only acts. The ancient game of punishment
Tortures the player as well as the victim,
Racks us with endgame, ironic image of justice,
Iron of irony, the revel ends, the word is flesh.
Death, the painkiller, tears off artificial clothes.
The skin, destroyed, burned, calcined,
Waits for spring growth, dies to be reborn.
Who mocks the nakedness of his father walks blindly
Into another country, another exile, nameless end.
Who will discover the word for another country?
In the beginning was the word, though the end be skin
And shining skin the ashes of darkness.

I WANT TO tell of the age of seven, he thought finally, staring at the blank sheet of white paper in the typewriter. A pewter vase of daffodils on the edge of the table had been waiting all afternoon for the vibration of the keys to make it tremble and topple over. The dying, tarnished gold flowers gave off a strong, soap-like scent that transformed the table into a country field. Seven, he repeated aloud. Summers at the beach with waves like mountains. My father coming home on the Long Island Railroad, in his weight and in his pride. My mother, freckled and young, white and yellow. A world of haze and hands and hot, bare feet on hot, burning sidewalks and hot, burning sand. Of learning how to swim and everything possible. Uncle Herman, bellied. Aunt Beattie, alive. And Uncle Paul and Aunt Rose. Uncle Abe and Aunt Doris, and May and Jimmy and Rose and Wally and Edith and Jack and Blanche and Harry. And Bess and Iz and Sam and Lil and Eddie and Rita

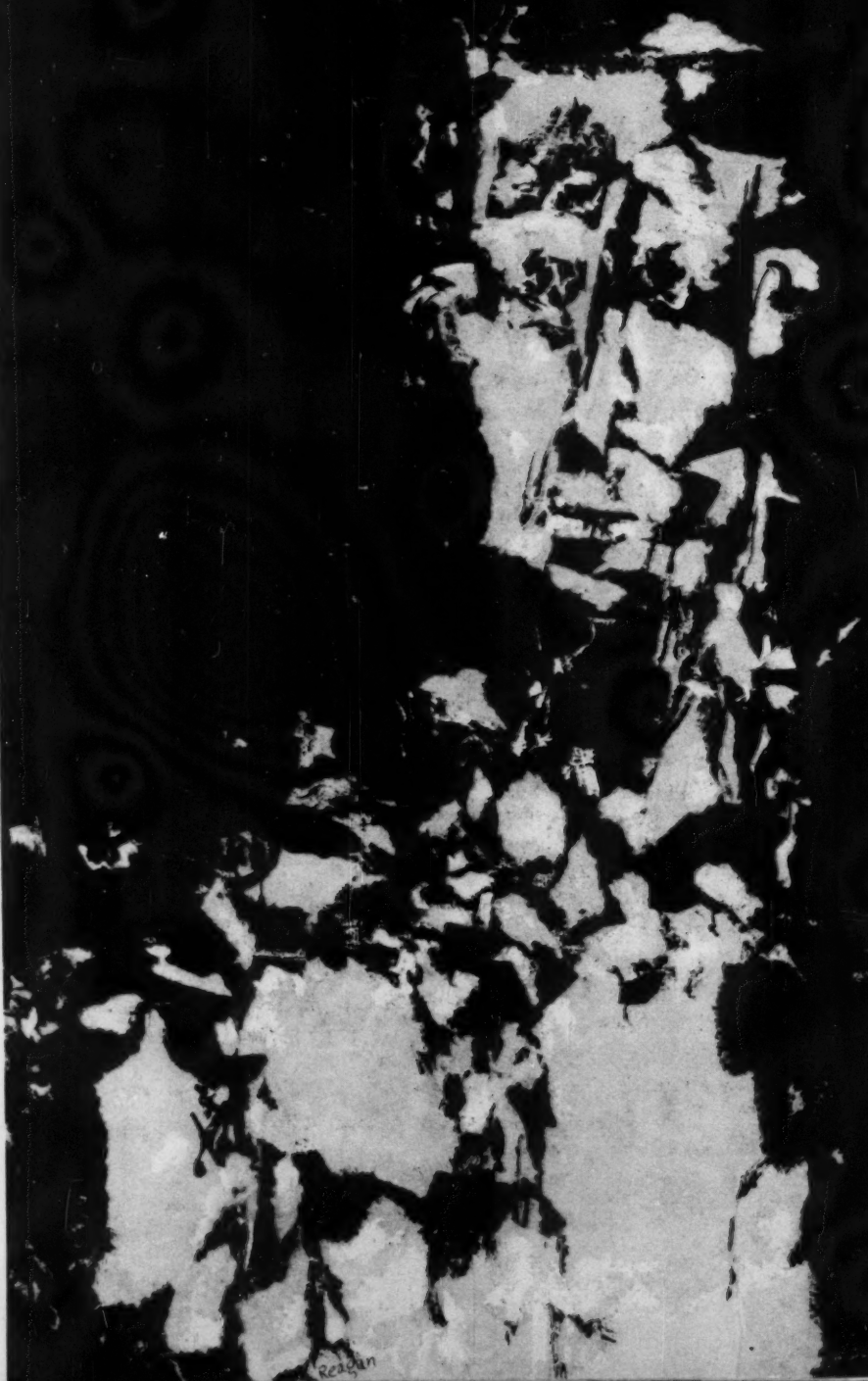
Edward Pomerantz

SWEETHEART, VIRGIN, AND GOD

and David and Joseph. Alice and Babsy, Robert and Johnny. All there. On blankets and diapers and bosoms and thighs. A family of great white fish in a sea of flesh. Crowding around the granite drinking fountains on the boardwalk to wash the sand from our feet. Sand is everywhere. Especially in your eyes and down the front of your bathing suit. Rings are lost and buried in the sand. And so are crusts of bread and peach pits and mah jong tiles and kings and queens. Nothing is stickier than a sandy pit or playing card. But as long as you're seven and near the ocean, everything is renewable. As long as you are young and loved and have the sun in your hair, you can always take one last duck.

"Dave, careful. The daffodils."

The sound of Dave's jumpy, two-finger typing awoke Ellen in an instant, just in time for her to see the vase fall. It lay between



Redden

their feet, the rim bent, the flowers lifeless and scattered in a steady stream of water.

"You know pewter bends easily. It's one of the few wedding gifts we haven't broken yet."

"I'm sorry," he said, picking it up. He tried to bend it back into place. Ellen went into the kitchen and came back with a sponge. The window was open, but it was a muggy spring day, and the room was without air. The sofa that Ellie had been sleeping on left an imprint on her cheek, like railroad tracks. She started to soak up the wet spot.

"I'll do it."

She shrugged him away petulantly, returned to the kitchen, and emptied the flowers into the garbage. Dave put the vase on a shelf.

"Sorry I woke you. It's the first good sleep you've had since we moved in."

"Your typing woke me. I was glad to hear it."

"How are you feeling?"

"Fine. So stop asking." She lit a cigarette. "Getting anything done?"

"Trying."

She reached under the sofa and found her Peds.

Crazy, crooked, periscopic big toe. A foot like a piano keyboard.

"What are you smiling at?" she asked, putting the Peds on.

"I had an idea. Why knock myself out? All these notes after all these years. I'll never be able to put them together. Why don't I just disappear somewhere. Then you can pass them off as the unfinished work of your tubercular husband who died a genius at the age of eight and a half."

"In a brothel, of course."

"Where else?"

"Any other bright ideas?"

"Yeah. Why don't I rent myself out as a professional inscription signer? You know. Something personal for phonies who want to impress their friends. My specialties would be Hemingway and Proust."

"How about the New Testament?"

"Hey. That's beautiful. I can see it now. 'Till we meet again, J.C.'"

Ellen laughed.

"You're really back in style, aren't you?"

They were both laughing now, and for a moment, everything seemed in place again. It was the first day since they had moved in that all the boxes and luggage were out of the way. A huge, corrugated Modess carton tearing at the corners with books had stood in the middle of the living room for the past week. When the shelves had arrived this morning and the books restored to their old haunt, each one in its own particular place, by author and category, Dave was finally able to take a deep breath and get to work. You fraud, he had thought to himself, as he unpacked them. So many of them picked up at bargain tables and out-of-the-way shops in Europe and across the country. But even if he hadn't gotten past the opening chapters of half of them, did that make them any less owned? There were other ways of knowing books, he thought, balancing the weight of the Twain in his hands, smelling the leaf of the Virginia Woolf, finding an old inscription from a forgotten friend in the Thomas Mann. The unpacking of books had always saddened him, like the emptying of pockets after a long time away, but this time he had caught himself angrily and put the rest of them in order without any further lingering. He had sat by the bedside of memories and dying friendships all his life. Must he nurse and coddle all his possessions until they die?

"When should we ask your father over for dinner?" Ellie asked from the kitchen.

"Tomorrow night, I guess. He wanted to come over and help us move in, but I told him to wait until we were all set up."

"Do you think his feelings were hurt?"

"I'll call him tonight."

Ellie came back with a glass of ginger ale and two of her pills.

"Feeding time." She winced and swallowed each one as if they were bullets.

"Do you always have to make such a production of it?"

"Everytime I take my pills it upsets you."

"It doesn't upset me. You just make everything so hard for yourself."

He felt an old annoyance begin to creep in, and he tried to make a joke of it, by smiling. Too late. She saw it and she recognized it.

"Maybe New York wasn't such a good idea after all," she said, going to a magazine and leafing through it.

"Come on, Ellie. Cut it out."

"Sorry." What she really wanted to say was something bitter and glib and guaranteed to hurt. Instead, she withdrew into her old hut, silence, and pulled the grass curtain between them for the thousandth time.

Dave decided to call his father. He dialed his old number and let it ring a couple of times, when he realized it was still too early. Dave's father ran an old-fashioned vegetable market on Columbus Avenue and never closed until he was absolutely sure the last rush-hour customer was out of the subway. "Who you waiting for? The conductor?" his mother used to ask, freezing on the street-corner beside his father, dressed in a paratrooper's coat and a pair of his old, white woolen socks. Dave didn't want to think of his mother. He had been trying to push her out of his mind all day. She had been dead only four weeks, and her illness had been the reason for their coming east. They hadn't expected to stay, but when Dave came into his mother's insurance money and Ellie saw in New York the one last chance to grasp at their lives together, despite her own illness and what the change in climate might do to her, they decided to send for their furniture and stick it out. The money would enable Dave to return to his serious writing without having to get a job right away, and Ellie could pick up her career where she left off.

"When are you going to call about classes?"

Ellie looked up from the magazine as if he had addressed the question to someone else in the room.

"I thought you were going to begin right away. What about your agent? Have you called him yet?"

She looked at him as if he were babbling.

"You could have called today. We were all cleaned up by this morning."

"I'll call tomorrow," she decided to say after thinking of something else first.

Now you see her, now you don't, Dave thought, falling in love again with the soft, brown hair, the brown-button eyes, the thin, pointed mouth that looked as if it had been painted on with a

pencil. How many times he had seen her magic act and marveled at it. The endless transitions and transformations. Child to woman, girl to bitch, queen to duckling, swan to rabbit, velvet to wood, bird to witch. An undressing of centuries. A blossoming of gardens. Right before his eyes. The movie dissolve without tricks or technique. Artless, elusive. Secret. It was never what Ellen had given him that had drawn him to her. He understood that now. It was what she withheld that constantly fascinated him. The fantastic ability she had to disappear into herself and return to him. That she could do this at all moved him to wonder. That she might not return drove him into panic.

Ellie was a good actress, Dave knew, an excellent one. At dramatic school, she had been the one most likely to succeed, (cursed from the beginning, she pointed out). Her talent was a rare one in that it depended less on quality and personality than on training, hard work, and exasperating effort. After getting off to an immediate start when she was twenty-two—a television show a month, two off-Broadway revivals with notices, the jobs stopped coming as abruptly as they had begun.

Looking back now at 30, she tried to piece together the rest of her resume. A trip to Europe. An affair. Studying and more studying. Another affair, a married man. A courtship. A million possibilities. Another million let-downs. A marriage. An illness. A moving. A stopping. A dying. For awhile, in the beginning, she and Dave were able to joke about it. She was his "was-been," and he was her "would-be." By the fourth year of their marriage, Dave began to despair. Whenever Ellie failed to impress an agent or a director, on a first meeting or reading, she became irritable, impatient, exasperated with her inability to "fake." Charm, in the social, seductive sense, did not come easily to Ellie. Unlike Dave, she had no tricks that she could trust or rely on. She was never any other person but herself, and it was this that Dave could never reconcile himself to. Ellie knew that Dave had lost hope for her, and there were times when she wished she could believe the same of him. But she couldn't. She had even been the one to insist on their coming back east, and now the thought of attempting to resume her own career and begin acting again filled her with old anger and unspeakable dread.

"Look what I found."

Dave pulled out a photograph from the address book near the telephone.

"I must have stuck this here when we were packing. I forgot all about it."

He propped the picture up against a lamp on the fireplace, and stood next to himself at the age of twelve or thirteen, blond and in his bones, sitting, smiling and hesitant, on a dumb, bored horse.

"I can never get over how blond you were," Ellie said, seeing it for the first time in years.

"It was Mom's favorite. She wanted us to put it in an album for when we had kids."

"We should do it, anyhow."

They looked at each other, their eyes and thoughts running head on, like two carefully aimed torpedoes.

"I still don't understand where the horse came from," Ellie went on quickly.

The torpedoes sailed between them, missing them only by inches.

"Didn't you ever take a penny pony ride when you were a kid? They used to visit all the old neighborhoods."

"I told you I was underprivileged."

"Next time they come around I'll take you on one."

"No, thanks. I'll walk."

Dave laughed. Ellie smiled, afraid of his laugh, and returned to the magazine.

Twelve was different from seven. The waves were still like mountains at twelve, but twelve was the summer Annie got polio, the winter she died. Aunt Daisy was in some kind of hospital again because she could never make up her mind. Your cousin Tony came to visit you that summer and he had a big head they called a water-head, and shook a lot, and had a lot of hair, and put his hand down Mommy's dress and Mommy laughed and got all red and Daddy made a joke about it. Tony's mother and father laughed too, but Mommy said they should have said something or been embarrassed, instead they just acted as if it was perfectly normal and that he was normal too, even if he did have a big head, it was because he had more brains than anybody else.

Twelve. Twelve was the summer some of the aunts had their

noses fixed and learned how to drive. The uncles got rich and started going into hospitals. You started to notice things you never really noticed before. Like nuns and cripples. And tight bathing suits. You slept in the same room with your parents with an ice-box at your head and when you woke up in the mornings the first thing you saw were the walls, all flowers and butterflies, smoke-stained from the stove. Saturday night was poker night and Mommy said isn't it wonderful how he can sleep through anything, but instead of falling out of bed to get attention like you did at seven, you smothered your head in the pillow and pretended, so you could hear the dirty words and laugh till you could hardly breathe. The bedspread was brown corduroy like your knickers, only it had bumps like buttons running through it, and the floor had bumps in it, too, hills of air, wherever the linoleum popped up. The only place your feet never made noise was in the sand. All along the beach there were black jetties covered with slippery green slimy moss, and once a summer, the sand bar would rise and when you walked out to it, you prayed you would come back because it could disappear right under your feet without any warning and even if you were the best swimmer in the world, what if you got cramps or something? Who would save you way out there?

Sometimes, on weekends, you went to Coney Island to visit your mother's Uncle Louis, who lived in the back of the store where he was a shoemaker, and his wife cried everytime she saw you because you looked like somebody who was dead. Walking along the boardwalk at night after a day on the beach, hot from your sunburn and chafed between the legs. The fancy white hotel with the awning and the fire escapes in front. The starry, diamond granite sidewalks. The sound of black waves against the night. And the laughter of beach parties. The music of ukeleles and penny arcades, the fights from fires on the beach and pokerino tables. And in the early morning, with the sun still high and cool behind the sky, the smell of garbage and fish coming in with the tide, cracked shells and skeletons, sand castles with mud drippings. Swimming toward the sun. Playing Catch and Saluggi. Actors and Actresses. War and Geography. Ghost and Flies-up. Steal The Old Man's Bundle. And The Clock Fell In The Toilet At Twelve. Annie's getting worse. She's in a wheelchair now and would everybody write. You

used to dress up with Annie and play Movie Stars, and one day she told you that she loved her father more than her mother, and you didn't understand how she could say such a thing.

Will I get polio, too, God? Please, God, don't let me get polio. And don't let Eddie get polio, either. Or Rita. Or anybody. Keep the ocean clean from germs, God, so we can swim out far and dive under the waves and do the Dead Man's Float without laughing or coming up for air . . .

"Where are you going?"

Ellie had gotten up and was walking towards the bedroom.

"I thought you were working."

"I was. I was thinking."

"Well, go on. I'll be inside. There's still some straightening to do."

She was wearing shorts, and as Dave watched her go into the bedroom, he noticed that her legs needed a shave. How can a man be expected to love a woman when her legs need a shave, he thought. Ellie began to hum softly, and he listened to her as he would to a bird. The recurring thought that perhaps he wasn't really capable of loving at all always startled him, of course, but never in the way he would have ever expected it to. It was always as if someone whispered it into his ear from behind and then vanished before he had the chance to see his accuser's face. More than anything else, he felt cheated. Somehow the moment of truth was reduced to a statement of fact, and the first time it came to him, he couldn't have been more or less surprised or embarrassed if he had just found out he was overdrawn at the bank.

"Need any help?" He could hear Ellie having trouble removing one of the dresser drawers.

"No, thanks," she called back. "It always gets stuck." He detected something bitter, deeply personal in her voice.

Activity. Arranging and rearranging. When in doubt, move the sofa. When in despair, move it back again. How many times had they stood in the middle of the room confronted with empty spaces and cluttered corners? He thought of his parents' house, and how, after he had moved away and gotten married, his mother had tried to rid the house of its look of absence, until one day when he returned he no longer recognized it. No surface went uncovered.

There were pictures everywhere. Graduation pictures, wedding pictures, pictures of the family. His own barmitzvah picture with the curls and the chins and the flabby, apple cheeks. The final tragedy of Dave's mother's life was that in trying to make the house look lived-in, she had died creating a jungle. Tiny china tea cups huddled together in bookcase corners. A flat, pink Buddha squatted in the shade of a television antenna. Oriental ladies and birds took baths along the walls, while every table lay hidden under his father's do-it-yourself mosaics and the tarnished silver from his mother's dead, scattered family.

Was that all everything added up to, Dave wondered. Just so much storage. How does one leave room when there are so many possessions, so much to be possessed? Was there no one object in his life that he could hold up and see clearly and say yes, this is, and this was, and this is what it all was for?

"Damn it," Ellie finally blurted out, not caring any longer if Dave heard, wanting him to hear.

Dave went into the bedroom.

"As usual, I give up," she said. She was on the verge of tears.

"Here. Let me."

"No," she snapped. "I know you can do it. Only I want to." She stood before the dresser as though she had been hired to guard it.

"Go on with your work. I'm sorry I disturbed you."

A light drizzle began outside and a breeze swept the bedroom curtains into a flurry. Dave shrugged carefully, aware that the shrug in itself was a comment, and returned to the dining room table. A few drops had spattered on the paper in the typewriter and he closed the window.

But if kids in Switzerland can't go to the movies until they're sixteen, what do they do when it rains? Or on Saturday afternoons? Was it thirteen you still had to sit in the children's section, or were you old enough to sit by yourself, but the matron wouldn't believe you because she had dyed blonde hair and hated kids. Thirteen was the year you learned how to ride a bicycle, and Michael Fischer pushed you down and broke your tooth because you wouldn't get off first base, and to get even you called him

a Nazi because he was German and your mother said it wouldn't be long before they'd take over the whole neighborhood.

You saw Michael years later at City College and you didn't say hello because you thought he would remember and you were still carrying your shame. You were Dick Deadeye at thirteen, and Schubert as a young boy. Miss Delaney was the science teacher, but if we promised to behave she would call off the day's work and sing Tit Willow for us on her stool by the sink in her low, black dress. Miss Delaney was like the baby-sitter you had once, who slept over on the cot in the living room and took off her pajama tops and asked if you would like to touch her to see what it was like, and she took your fingers and moved them up and down, and it was like tracing, only it was different, and there was hair around her bellybutton. One night, her boy friend came over and they made sounds in the living room.

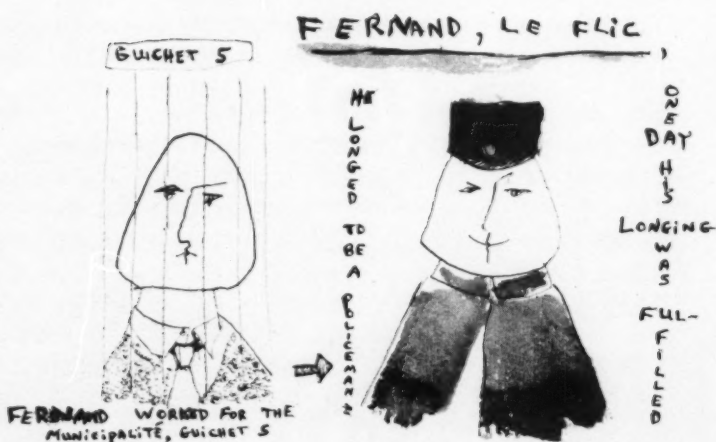
At thirteen, your girl friend was Mitzi Metzcoff, and so was Fritz Ronger. Your best friend was Lewie Weiss, even though his mother never let him go to the movies with you, because one day Lewie found a scum-bag in the toilet of the Loew's men's room, and you told him what it was, and like a shmuck, he told his mother. The Loew's lobby had gold walls and a bright, red carpet that spread all the way up to the balcony on a wide, sweeping staircase. At the top was a huge chandelier, and inside there were statues, naked and bronze, with arms across their chests, standing in alcoves above the boxes. The back of the orchestra smelled of damp rugs, and no matter what time of day it was, it was always night, and the black, spaceless orchestra pit was like a heaven without air, a cave without walls. Nothing moved or mattered but the great, grey moving figures on the screen, and nothing stirred but the curling stream of cigarette smoke traveling down from the balcony in that white column of light marching out of the projection booth. How could anyone recreate the timelessness and strangeness of those lost days spent inside dark, gilded movie palaces? Even now, you couldn't resist straying into lobbies and looking at the posters. But even more than the gilding and the posters, it was the smell that drew you back. That rich, candied, coated, carpeted smell that stank of hotel corridors and amusement parks and funeral parlors and Taj

Mahals. Ah, yes, you knew that smell, all right. No matter where you were or what disguise it was in, you would always recognize it as the stench of safety.

Next to movies, the thing you loved most was sleeping over. Even if it was across the street, you slept over until every house became identified by its odor. Melvyn's always smelled from pee, and Stanley's, like a hospital, because his father was a dentist and his mother's maid was always cleaning. Stanley's mother always put her hands all over your face and said, "Just like a baby's behind," as if it was your fault Stanley started shaving when he was only in Departmental.

You slept over at Aunt Essie's house a lot, and at Aunt Daisy's in Weehawken, until the uncles made more money, and moved to Long Island, where they bought Buicks, and the aunts added brown fur collars to their Persian lamb coats, and silver-white streaks, like paint, to their hair.

Thirteen was the year Grandpa's room became yours, but no matter how many coats of paint they added, it still smelled from the sourness of wine and the dampness of his underwear and ancient black prayer books. When Grandpa was alive, you used to sit out on the fire escape in the hot weather, and recite the Jewish alphabet for him, while he wiped his mouth with his sleeve and spit out watermelon seeds. On Saturdays, dirty old men with black curls hanging down the sides of their faces, would visit and lock themselves in Grandpa's room which was



always dark, even when he read his prayer books, and he could never get his desk drawer open because it was filled too full with twine and broken barber shop clippers. One night, when you had an ear abscess and Daddy carried you into the big bed and the doctor came, it was Grandpa who sat by your side and pushed your hair back and kept repeating in a soft, sad song: "Don't cry. I cry. Don't cry. I cry," until the morning came; and a few weeks later, Grandpa was dead.

Just before Daddy got sick, he used to get up at three in the morning to go to the market and sometimes he didn't get home until one in the morning. Night after night you would wake and catch him walking past your room in his long flannel underwear, clutching at the walls. When Daddy got sick there was a great silence in the house, and Mommy used to go inside and put her head to his heart to hear if he was breathing. Your father never raised his voice to you or hit you. That was Mommy's job to do the hitting and the worrying and the visiting at Open School Week. Daddy's job was to sign your report card and make sure Mommy didn't make a sissy out of you.

Thirteen was the year your mother decided you and your father should be closer, so on Thursday nights when she played mah jong, you and Daddy went to the movies and had an ice cream soda, and later, when he lay in his bath, his belly, like the top of a whale, protruding above the surface of the water, he told you about his life as a young boy when he washed the

by Roger Barr



ALMOST

HIS FIRST JOB
WAS IN THE PARC
MONTSOURIS
WHERE HE KEPT
PEOPLE OFF THE
GRASS
(IN THE
SUMMER.)

PELOUSE; INTERITE

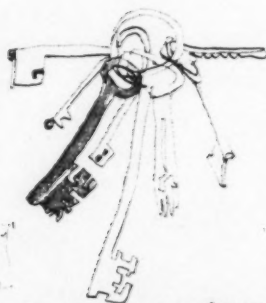
bathroom floor for his mother and rode on the backs of trolley cars. When Daddy was sixteen, all the girls on the beach thought he was older. During the day, he could get away with it because he wore swim trunks, but in the evenings all he owned were knickers, so he always had to borrow his older brother's long pants.

Daddy took up sculpture and drawing as a young man, and even though he never graduated from Peter Stuyvesant, he posed in the nude once for a sketching class, and was the only one in the family to wear spats and carry a walking stick on Sunday afternoons. One day, you and Daddy walked along the Hudson and he called your mother "Mama" the way he used to call his own, and he told you how much he appreciated her because she bought three-dollar dresses and two-dollar shoes and never complained, even when they couldn't pay the electric bill once, and groped their way to bed in the dark, holding on to each other until morning.

When you and Daddy didn't have anything to talk about, except Mommy or girls or the days when he was young and had a great physique, the silence between you was so thick it seemed as if there was a third person in the room. But for all that still remained unspoken and unforgiven, he was your father, and one day you watched him give half of his sandwich to a delivery boy because he couldn't go on eating, while another person stood by, hungry. He was your father, and when there



IN THE WINTER FERNAND HAD A LITTLE HUT WITH ONE CHAIR AND A COAL STOVE, WHERE HE COULD WARM HIMSELF DURING HIS ROUNDS.



HE HAD MANY KEYS
(TO LOCK AND UNLOCK ALL THE
GATES, DOORS, AND HIS COALBOX)
HE LOVED THEIR WEIGHT
AND SOUND, AND AUTHORITY.

was a great silence or a great closeness between you, you saw him naked and ignorant, like the man he was; in his face there shone an innocence, in his innocence, an agony. When your father came home from the market, he sat on the edge of the tub and washed his feet, and you loved him when he sat there, because he was a man who sweated and never cried, and as long as he was your father, and he loved your mother, and for every day of their lives that they had both stood in the rain selling vegetables, you would never know real sleep or rest again until you could answer for their effort in a loud, clear voice...

Dave started, and looked up. Ellie was standing in front of him. She looked wild. For a moment, he expected her to rip the paper out of the typewriter and tear it to shreds.

"My earrings. What have you done with them?"

"What earrings?"

"The pierced ones. The little pierced ones my father gave me when I was a girl. I've looked all over for them. Where are they?"

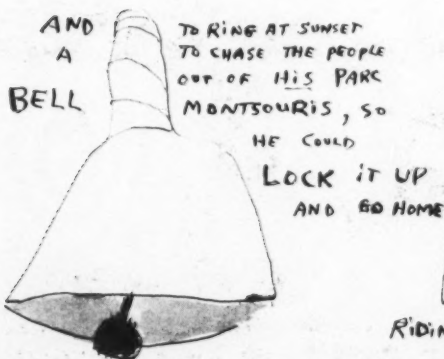
Dave lowered his eyes.

"You took them, didn't you?"

"I hocked them."

Ellie clenched her fists and looked up, trying to force back the tears. She looked as if she was coming up for air.

"Last week. We needed the money. My mother's hadn't come in yet. I had to..."



"Liar. Liar," she finally screamed, the tears finding their way down her cheeks and into her mouth.

"Ellie. Listen to me."

"No. You did it just to take. Just to take from me."

"We needed the money."

"Then why didn't you ask me for them? You knew what they meant to me, so you took them."

"Ellie..."

"Damn you."

Dave got up from the chair and tried to hold her by the arms. She pulled away, almost knocking the both of them off balance.

"Thief. Liar. Damn you."

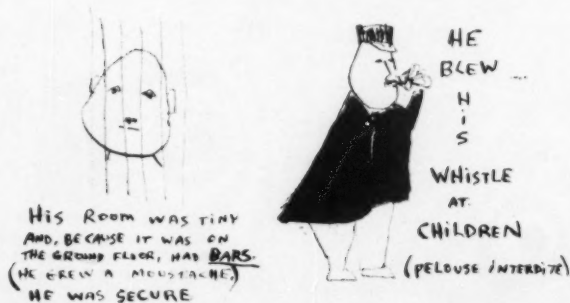
Dave started to speak, but he could hardly swallow. The smell of turkey drifted in from the apartment next door, and for a moment, he thought he was going to be sick. He went to the closet and grabbed his jacket.

"Damn you," she called after him. He opened the door. "Damn you. Damn you. Damn you. Damn you. Damn you. Damn you..."

There was a woman standing in the hall waiting for the elevator. When Dave came out, she looked away as if she had been caught peeping. Dave made a run for the stairway. Ellie's echo trailed him all the way down.

Prevues of Coming Attractions

Ellen and Dave were married when they were both twenty-four. They had met two years before on a ship going to Europe.



Dave was standing by a piano singing Rodgers and Hart, and Ellie was reading. She looked up and smiled. Dave smiled back, noticed that the book was *Look Homeward, Angel*, and sang the rest of the song in her direction. The third night out, they wrapped themselves in blankets and sat on the deck, waiting for the sunrise.

"I wonder how the birds keep warm," Ellie said. The moon had turned the sea to shellac and the cold made their teeth ache. Dave kissed her and put his hand underneath her sweater. Ellie shivered and opened her mouth to him.

"Oh, god," she said, after he had kissed her.

"What is it, darling?"

"Nothing. I feel so sorry for women who have no breasts." She filled with tears. "I'm not a virgin, Dave. Do you mind?"

"I am. Do you?"

Ellie giggled with delight.

"Hey. Stop catching me off guard, you. You know what the trouble with you is? You're too damned nice for my own good."

"Don't be so sure of me," Dave said. "I always know when I'm nice."

"That wouldn't be a warning, would it?"

"Just setting the record straight, that's all."

They would have slept together that night, but Ellie shared a cabin with three strangers and Dave had a bunk in a dormitory. Dave knew there were other places, but this was something different, and they both agreed, without words, to wait. When the ship docked at Southampton, Dave got off to go to London,

AND
FINALLY
GOT
P
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D



AND RODE AROUND PARIS IN THE POLICE WAGON
WHICH MADE A FEARFUL HEE HAW HEE HAW SOUND

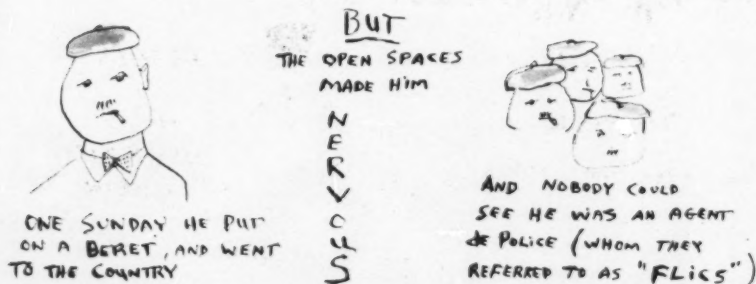
(WHEN IN A HURRY, LIKE GOING
HOME FOR LUNCH.)

and Ellie remained on board until Le Havre. They made arrangements to meet in Florence in two weeks. In Florence, Dave got a letter from Ellie at American Express telling him that she had to remain in Paris and would catch up with him in Barcelona. In Barcelona, there was another letter, and in Lucerne, no letter at all. Dave didn't see Ellie until he got back to the States, and that was some time in December.

He was in his first year of graduate school and it was Christmas vacation. They went to a play, had a hot chocolate in Schrafft's, and kissed goodnight at her door. Dave swore to himself that he would never see Ellie again, and Ellie promised herself that she would not hurt him any more than she already had.

In April, Dave called again. They stood in line in the rain for a new French movie, had blini in the Russian Tea Room, and kissed and petted on her sofa until three in the morning. In the summer, Ellie got a job in stock, and had her third affair, with the director, a married man with two children. When Dave took Ellie to a party in August, she called him "dear" in a voice he had never heard before, and told him later, biting her lip, that it was no use, it wasn't fair what she was doing to him. A week later, Dave began a brief affair with an artist, a woman three years older than himself, and that September, returned to graduate school where he was pursued all year by a young, homosexual teacher, whom he eventually went to bed with the following spring.

The night that Dave finally took Ellie for his own, both lovers looked back upon the route they had traveled. Each excursion



had been brief and dark, but the stars had followed them wherever they went. Safe, and with his heart running, Dave cried in Ellie's arms that night without any warning from himself, while Ellie held on with whatever strength she had left, thanking God, and knowing that she would never let go again.

They were married from the home of Ellie's parents on a warm, spring day in February. The wedding went off exactly as they had wanted it. There were about eighty guests, mostly their own friends. ("This isn't a wedding," Dave's mother kept insisting. "It's a birthday party.") The rabbi conducted a dignified, reformed ceremony, the best man wept, the groom went blank, and the bride's knees shook all the way down the aisle. That night, they stopped at a small lodge in Bear Mountain, where, after they had loved and bathed together, Dave reminded Ellie, just for the record again, that she had married a very young man.

The first year of their marriage, they lived in a small university town, where Dave was a playwright-in-residence, and Ellie taught Dramatics at the Community Center. They had \$2,000 in wedding money in the savings account, a two-room basement apartment with knotty pine walls. Ellie baked and made the curtains, and Dave wrote a three-act play which everyone called promising. He had just completed it when he got his draft notice.

Tuesday, February 2

Angel,

Waiting again. This time an inspection on our clothing marking.

HE WAS
MUCH
HAPPIER
(AND MORE SECURE.)



LOCKED
IN
THE
BIG BLACK
WAGEN

I've put little cards in each sock saying, "Hello. My name's Dave. What's your name?"

Hey, you. As the snow falls, and the crow flies, and the bed is lonely, I miss you, brat. Even if you are a lousy spellerer. What do you mean you'll be up to visit me the day after "tomorrow?" You onion, you. Tell all friends CARE packages will be greatly appreciated. No soup. Just old movie magazines and a Childs' menu. I daren't dream of the Sunday Times. If I could just learn to live without Section Two.

How are you, my button? Just how are you?

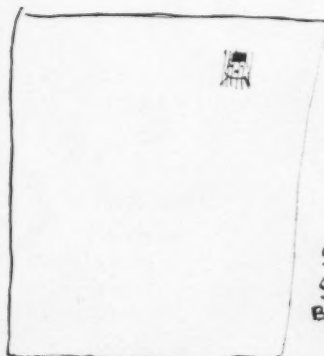
Toomorrow.

Dave

Monday, March 15

Infant:

Was I really home? Did the maitre D in that tacky French restaurant really offer to squeeze two tomatoes for us when they ran out of tomato juice? Darling, mitten, noodle. Dear friend. You know what love is? I've figured it out. It's hands and feet. It's me sitting on the sink at three in the morning, and you, on the edge of the tub, with my bare foot in your hands, trying to take a splinter out. It's that feeling of permanence in the midst of everything that's temporary, and with it, the incredible discovery and rediscovery that it's always so simple. Do you realize this god damned army is turning our marriage into an affair? This weekend stuff has got to stop. Should be hearing



AT LAST
HE WAS MADE
A TRAILER OF THE
TOP FLOOR OF THE
MUNICIPAL PRISON
AND WAS
EVEN GIVEN
A SMALL ROOM OF HIS
OWN, RIGHT IN THE SAME
BIG, GREY STONE PRISON.

HE
SELDOM
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OUT

in two weeks about where we're being shipped. Met an old friend, Jake Stuart, at C & A (Classification and Assignment), who says he'll let me know as soon as he finds out. Darling, if it is overseas, if it is Korea... it might be, nugget. Be patient and brave. Just a little while longer. I...

Thursday, March 25

Sweet heart,

Spoke to Jake again today. He says it's up to me, but I've got to tell him yes or no by tomorrow. All that's involved is his crossing my name out on one set of orders and adding it to another, stationing me somewhere near home. Damn him. Damn the choice. I'm pursued all day by that god damned line from one of the Henry's: "Are these things necessities? Then let us meet them like necessities." God, how difficult it is not to want, not to want all. How impossible life seems without your tenderness again. The strength it takes to need you without despair. My darling, my secret, silent listener-in-the-dark. So easy it is to turn our love into a shelter, and use it to hide from ourselves. If love is to survive, then it must come out of the shadows and declare itself. Loudly, without being heard. Visibly, without being seen. Like air. Always there. Our breathing place...

Ten days later, Dave found himself on a plane headed for



Arkansas where he was to remain for the next six months. His friend had been able to get him out of Korea, but at the last minute the home unit they were counting on was all filled up. After Arkansas came Missouri, and then, finally, Colorado...

Monday, June 30

Ellie darling,

This life without you is tedious, difficult, and empty. This life without you is without you . . .

Friday, August 5

. . . The first sergeant ordered a colored kid to pick up a used prophylactic in a puddle today, and the kid told him to go to hell. The sergeant got him behind the barracks and kicked him in the groin. I just stood there. My leave is coming up next month. As always I scream at the sky and end up swallowing the wind . . .

October 21, Monday

. . . Things to teach Ellie when this is over: To swim and never to be afraid. Things for Ellie to teach Dave: To go slowly.

Thursday, January 30
11:26 A.M.

Ellie . . .

Listen.

I love you.

Did you hear me?

I said I love you.

Close your eyes and put your hands to your ears.

I'll say it again.

Feel it?

I love you, Ellie.

Know it?

I'm saying it for the first time.

I'm saying it for the first time.

A month after Dave got his discharge, he was offered a job teaching English and Creative Dramatics in a small, progressive school in Brooklyn Heights. It started in the fall. It was now the end of winter. Ellie was "making rounds," and working part time

at assorted secretarial jobs, they had two war bonds in an old brief case at the top of the closet, a '48 Chevy with a FOR SALE sign on the rear window, and \$3.47 in the checking account. Dave looked in the Times Want Ad Section every morning and in the spring, began work on his new play.

"Now, here's something."

"What?" Ellie put down her cup of coffee. Dave was on the floor on his stomach, swimming in the Sunday papers. She came over and kneeled alongside of him.

"Wanted. Assistant Beginner."

"Beginner in what?"

"Doesn't say. Just with or without a wagon."

"Well, that's a hint." She wet her finger with her tongue and rubbed newsprint from his elbow.

"How about this one? Midget. Under four-foot-six. To run a sandwich counter."

She closed the papers.

"Come on. Back to work."

"Let's go to the movies."

"No."

"They've got an old young Bette Davis at the Gem. I'll call and find out what time it goes on in the middle."

"Maybe later."

"Okay. Okay." He got up, brushed off his knees, and returned to the typewriter. "God, the words," he said, re-reading what he had already written. He sat down and crossed out an entire page. He put a new sheet of paper in the roll and stared at it for a full five minutes.

"What are you looking at?"

"You," she answered.

"Why? What's so fascinating?"

"Nothing. I was just watching you think, that's all."

"Well cut it out."

"Why? I love to watch you when you're writing."

"Don't. That's all. Cause then I start writing that way."

"What way?"

"As though you're watching me."

They laughed. Ellie came over and sat on his lap.

"What's this?"

"I won't stay long. It's intermission."

"Can't be. I haven't finished Act One yet."

She opened her mouth and kissed him.

"There."

"You've got lipstick on your teeth."

She pulled up sharply. "Rat."

"Why don't you go without lipstick for a change? I mean it."

"Why, for God's sake?"

"I don't know. I just like you that way. When you were a kid, you didn't wear lipstick."

"I didn't wear tops to my bathing suits, either."

"Hey. That's an idea."

"Any other changes you'd like to make?"

"Now you're angry."

"I am not. I'm mad. If you don't like the way I look, keep it to yourself."

"Who said I didn't . . ."

"If it isn't my lipstick, it's my hair. If it isn't my hair, it's my clothes. You're never satisfied."

"Forget it, will you. Forget I ever said anything."

"I'm 27, Dave. That's no kid."

"Who said anything about . . ."

"I'm sick and tired of having to look like Alice-In-Wonderland for you."

"What the hell got us onto this?"

"Your mother never forgets how old I am. Why don't you check with her?"

"What does my mother have to do with it?"

"She called this morning. While you were sleeping."

"What'd she want?"

"A grandchild."

"Oh."

"Yes. Oh."

"What's her price this time?"

"She's on a new kick. Instead of blaming it on me and my career, now she's got it into her head we're not having a baby because we're broke. Today, she and your father offered to pay

for everything. Hospital bills, bassinets, diaper service, the whole works."

"I'll call her. Now."

"She's not home. She's at the doctor."

"The doctor?"

"I wasn't supposed to worry you. But she had another bad night last night. She's getting panicky."

When Dave's mother found out that her husband had managed to tell Ellie she had been sick, she said to Dave: "I always knew your father missed his calling. He should have been a diplomat."

"What's wrong with you, ma?"

"What are you, a specialist? Stop giving me a checkup."

"A specialist wouldn't be a bad idea."

"What for? So he can tell me I'm sick. I know that. I don't need him to tell me."

"Then what do you need?"

"Don't ask me, David. Don't ask and then not give it to me."

The silence lasted a minute. Dave held the phone close to his ear and listened to the sound of his mother's breathing on the other end. Then, quietly, in another voice:

"Ellie and I will have our baby when we're ready to have it. Not before."

"So daddy and I are *making* it ready for you. Is that so terrible? So we pay a couple of bills."

"That's not the reason."

"David. Listen to me. A heart breaks, David. From one thing or another, it breaks. Let mine break from happiness, that's all I ask."

"No."

"What, no?"

"Just no."

"David, listen. You frighten me sometimes, the way you answer. I'm a mother, David. A mother is entitled."

"To how much?" he answered inaudibly.

"David. Are you there? Listen to me. Your happiness is my happiness. It's coming to me . . ."

That summer, Dave finished his play, and one afternoon he and Ellie gave a reading of it for a couple of friends. Dave played the male parts and Ellie played the two women, one of whom closely

resembled Dave's mother. Ellie's reading of the mother was one of the worst performances she had ever given. From the very beginning, she had made a judgment upon the character, and by the end of the reading, she had indicted her. When the play was thrown out into the arena for criticism, Dave and Ellie hardly looked at each other, and later, after the guests had left, Dave withdrew into a dark silence that was to last all week. Ellie knew that she had failed him, but her concern was mostly with his disappointment in her as an actress. Dave knew this, and resented her even more, for not recognizing or suspecting that it went further and deeper.

In July, Ellie got called for a last-minute summer stock opening by a director she had worked for when she was twenty-one. Seeing her now for the first time since then, he apologized profusely for inconveniencing her. One afternoon, when they were walking through Ellie's old neighborhood, Dave discovered a playground. He asked Ellie to go on the seesaw with him, and Ellie said no, she was afraid he would drop her. Dave got annoyed and raised his voice. A little girl with pierced ears and long legs disentangled herself from the monkey bar and stopped to look at them. Caught by a glimpse of the little girl's middy blouse, not unlike her own of many years ago, and penetrated, almost crucified by the little girl's stare, Ellie screamed back at Dave in a voice that turned him to stone. Standing there, frozen, looking into her wild, bloodless face, Dave thought that the sun had gone out of the world. Never in his life had he seen such injury, felt such loss. The little girl began to climb the monkey bar again, in and out, until she reached the top. Ellie turned and walked away. Three days later, on a crosstown bus, Dave looked back on the afternoon in the playground, and almost missed his stop. In the past, when he had flung his temper at her in a public place, she had been humiliated and hurt. But this time they had stood on sacred ground, and with a child as witness, he had violated her. It wasn't only for her own loss and damage that Ellie had cried out that day. She had vindicated the child. Later that August, Ellie had her first asthmatic attack since she was seven years old.

At the end of the school year, Dave received a call from his agent, telling him that there was a job waiting for him in Califor-

nia, if he wanted it. Ellie had been seriously ill all winter, and the California climate was the one cure all the doctors had agreed upon. He had enjoyed teaching, but with the sale of a television play earlier in the year, he had met his first movie star and read his first review. By the time second semester rolled around, Creative Dramatics had ceased to be either. His friends had kidded him about "selling out," but if there was one thing that Dave had learned from teaching, it was that a person could deceive himself in the most honorable of professions, and that for all his candid talk and sunny humor, he had played his role with a putty nose and a false beard. Energetic, opinionated, unsophisticated, he was adored by his students in the same way that old ladies dote upon handsome, young doctors.

The most talented actress in the school, and the one who worshipped Dave most seriously, was a girl of fifteen, with sad, brown eyes and the name of Alexandra. When Alexandra got the lead in the Christmas play, Dave worked with her after class and every evening. One night, Dave had an idea for a play. He started to tell Ellie about it, but seeing her thin, sallow ghost asleep on the sofa, he realized with pain that she was no longer his Heroine, and grateful that she hadn't awakened, he went out for a walk instead. A month later, Dave kept Alexandra after class to watch a special improvisation he had assigned her. It was his twenty-ninth birthday, and she surprised him with a present. Dave thanked her and kissed her lightly on the cheek. The scent of her hair made him linger, and for one terrible moment, he thought seriously and passionately of biting the lobe of her ear. Three days later, his agent called. Yes, he was indeed interested. He and Ellie would be packed and on their way by the end of May.

Six months after they had moved, Ellie recovered from her illness and Dave lost his job. The producer was sorry, but he had made an error in judgment. Two weeks later, Dave met a director he knew, who offered him a job as leg man on his latest movie. For the next three months, Dave parked the director's car and carried his lunch. One morning, the star of the film, in a rush to get on the set, asked Dave if he would be kind enough to flush her toilet. He did that, too.

One evening, on his way home from the studio, Dave's eye was

caught by a wooden plaque hanging in the window of a tourist shop. There was a drawing on it of two men, each sitting in a barrel, one skinny, the other fat, both naked and smoking corn-cob pipes. Underneath the barrels, it said: THE WORLD OWES YOU A LIVING. BUT YOU HAVE TO WORK HARD TO COLLECT IT. When the lady inside asked a dollar for it, Dave gave her a five and told her to keep the change. That night, he nailed it over his desk.

On a Sunday in April, Dave thought of a character for a new story. A respectable young man who steals from a church every day for a whole week. First, a candlestick, then a Crucifix. Little by little. Until Sunday. Easter Sunday. In the middle of the Mass. A madman. Stripping the altar of its tapestries as Christ was stripped of his garments.

Two weeks later, when Dave's father called from New York to tell him that his mother was dying of cancer, Dave had already committed his first small theft.

2

Out on the street Dave walked down the block toward the subway as if he were still being pursued by Ellie's voice.

At the corner, a young, blonde woman with a brimming bag of groceries, was trying to maneuver a baby carriage up on the curb. Dave stopped to help her and a can of fruit fell on his foot.

"Your foot."

"Your can."

The woman blushed and Dave apologized. Chalk up another one, he thought, crossing against the light. It's moral inventory time again. Good deeds on one side. Deficits on the other.

Dave's Character

Past

1. Held a drunk sailor's head while he vomited on a street-corner.
2. Depledged from fraternity.
3. Went to shul the night the Rosenbergs were executed.

Present

1. On time for appointments.
2. Thanked elevator operators.
3. Remembered birthdays.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 4. Stopped on parkway to help couple change a flat. | 4. Kept small promises. i. e., called people back, etc. |
| 5. Tipped waitress with last dime. | 5. Thought of tipping. |
| 6. Refused to sign a loyalty oath. | 6. Sent get-well cards. |
| 7. Gave up vacation to help parents in store. | 7. Helped distraught, young women with bundles and baby carriages. |

Checking off his latest entry, Dave was reminded of the joke about the Old Lady and the Boy Scout. When the Scout's father asked his son where he had gotten his black eye, the Scout replied: "Helping an old lady across the street, sir." "Then why the black eye?" the father persisted. To which the Scout replied: "She didn't want to go."

When was the last time he had made an entry on the other side, he wondered. Had no heroic opportunities arisen since then? But every gesture of courtesy is an heroic one, he protested to himself. As long as one man extends his hand to another, he's always on the credit side. Then why didn't this last gesture count? Or the others? Walking toward the steps to the subway, he likened himself to the king who drank a dose of poison every morning to immunize himself against future assassination. Hadn't he, too, been trying to inoculate himself? Weren't good intentions and Boy Scout manners strong enough biotics? Or had he played it safe, and settled on them as watered-down substitutes? Hearing the express pull into the platform, Dave ran down the subway steps and gave the token man a quarter. Squeezing in, between the closing doors, he brushed off his jacket and looked in his hand. In the rush to make it, he had short-changed himself by a nickel.

MOON ROCKET FALLS OVER AFRICA

Dave found a seat and looked at the floor. Scatter-rugs of headlines were strewn all along the half-empty, late-afternoon car.

SON SLAYS FATHER OVER SEXPOT

"I knew she meant well and everything, but I just had to go home and be by myself. There's just nothing like being upset in your own house."

Two young women, wearing identical flowered hats, were yelling to each other over the rumble of the train. In front of the doors, blonde twins, a boy and a girl, swung around the white center pole and reached for imaginary brass rings.

"It doesn't surprise me," the other woman was saying. "From the minute you introduced him to me, I always had a suspicion."

Dave gazed along the galaxy of ads around the car and wondered when he would feel his first sensation. Ellie had called him a liar and a thief. That was real. And he had fled. That was real, too. But the scene had been played as if *he* had written it, and then had sat out in front to watch it, invisible to the actors. Riding through the tunnel now, Dave still felt invisible, to himself, a zombie, fleshless and cold, no insides, all insides, bones. He shuddered and looked up at another ad. A redhead, with her mouth open, offered him a taste of her King Size Filter.

I want to know what love is, he thought. I know it's too late, but tell me. Is there no way of recognizing it, except by its absence? Tell me. Tell me, he insisted silently, under the rattle of the train. Only two of us, and yet there's so much traffic. Oh God, he thought, closing his eyes. Guilty. Guilty of absence, of void, of no longer caring, of taking and taking and never letting go. He remembered a fight, an early fight, Ellie, without camouflage, angry and wounded, ready to surrender . . .

"No, Dave. No. It's no use. We're finished. We made a mistake . . ."

"Why do you always have to . . ."

"What? Go on. Say it. Make such a production of it? How many times do I have to tell you I'm not made the way you are?"

"But how can you go on living your way? How can you ever have any peace?"

"You kid," she blurted out frantically. "You poor, deluded kid. You expect the whole world to turn itself on and off for you like a faucet. I may not have peace, but at least I'm myself."

"What the hell does that mean?"

"I don't know . . ."

"I suppose I don't feel as deeply as you do . . ."

"I didn't say that. But feeling is more than being moved or being sensitive, Dave. Forgive me, my darling. But you cry so easily and heal so quickly."

Dave stared at her as if he had been struck across the face. "Thank you," he said.

"Oh, Dave."

"I've been telling you for years to beware of my sentimentality. You never took heed."

"Oh, Dave. Stop it, for God's sake."

"Well, it's the truth, isn't it?"

"You're acting like a hurt little boy."

"That's part of my charm, isn't it?"

"You love when I tear you down, don't you?" she said, confronting him, forcing him to look at her. "You take it as punishment and consider yourself all paid up. How easily you let yourself off. No wonder you always survive."

"Bravo."

"Oh, Dave. Stop it. Why must you always show me how angry I am? I hate talking to you like this. It makes everything glib and easy and pushes everything back on to the surface again. Words, Dave. Words. You use them too well, too quickly for me. And before I know it, you've talked your way in and out, and I've lost again, lost you, lost us . . ."

Brushing soot from his elbow, Dave looked into the reflection in his window of the train and couldn't see his eyes. Guilty, he repeated to himself. But what was the crime? The freedom and blessing of a namable, definable, punishable crime . . .

When the doors steamed open at the next stop, Dave watched a fat woman bounce down the stairs and hold the closing doors apart with her hips. Smacking her young, shapeless son into the car ahead of her, she wedged herself in, and swung her skirt around to the front again. Dave looked at his watch. With good crosstown connections, he would make the pawnshop just before it closed. The fat woman grabbed her son by the wrist and propped him up on a seat. Dave was afraid she was going to sit on him. He reached for his wallet and checked to see if he had the pawn stub. The fat woman unwrapped a Hershey bar and sucked the soft chocolate

through her teeth. Dave found the stub and put it back. He held the wallet in his hands and looked at the child. The train was rocking through the tunnel now like a stupid, lumbering animal. A local station flickered past. Black and white phantoms lurched from the shadows. A film negative was being raced through a broken projector, the elephant rode faster through a dark, recurring nightmare . . . Daddy, I can't see. The man in front is too tall. The father changed his seat and his wallet dropped to the floor. Nobody noticed it. Nobody but you. Pick it up, Dave, and give it back. Pick it up and give it back. Pick it up, pick it up, pick it up . . . Nobody noticed. Nobody but you . . .

Waiting on the street-corner for the crosstown bus, Dave took another inventory. How many other things had he taken since that first terrible afternoon in a dark, movie-house? A ball point pen, waiting in an office. A flowered ashtray, browsing in an antique shop. A pair of sunglasses in a drugstore. A bar of soap in a super market. What else? How many things had he left out? Forgotten about? A bum walked up to him and asked for a handout. Dave said no and called him sir.

On the bus, Dave shouldered his way to the back, where he was welcomed by the same redhead who had solicited him on the subway. Her mouth was still open, only now she was on water skis. The bus lurched forward and Dave hung by a strap. A pregnant woman got up and he fell into her seat.

The old lady he sat next to was wearing a black lace dress. "Sorry," he said, and she edged closer to the window. They smiled at each other. Not just a polite smile, Dave thought. I've just been forgiven. Sneaking another glance at her, he saw that she was looking at him. Eyes like an owl's. Skin like chalk.

"My fan. It disgusts you?"

Dave laughed.

"No. It doesn't bother me at all."

"Bother. I must remember. Disgust is the wrong word. No?"

"Yes."

Dave smiled. The old lady laughed. A sanitation truck passed by and flooded the gutters with water. The old lady shivered from the spray through the window. She covered her arms with her black, lattice shawl.

"You are an American. Yes."

"Yes. I am."

Dave was surprised at his willingness to talk. The senora's silver hair was shining in the sunlight. Must be as long as a river, he thought, wanting to unravel it. A comb, like the tail of a peacock, stood guard and held it together.

"My grandchild. She is American, too."

"You have a family here?" Dave asked.

"Yes. My daughter. My son was killed in the war."

"Oh."

"A long time ago. When you were still in your cradle."

"I'm not as young as I look."

"How old?"

"Thirty."

"No!" She crossed herself with her fan.

"You don't look like any grandmother," Dave teased.

"Oh, stop. You make me laugh."

"You don't."

"How old you think?"

"No fair."

"As old as *your* grandmother? As pretty?"

"I never saw my grandmother. She died before I was born . . ."

"Oh."

"But I've seen pictures of her, and she looked as young and as pretty as you."

The senora laughed and hid her face behind her fan.

"At 73?"

"No." Dave drew a breath and tried not to overdo it. The senora took the fan away and tapped him playfully on the arm.

"You Americans. You lie like thieves."

They both laughed and the bus came to a stop. Out on the street, a group of boys were shooting for baskets, using a rung in the ladder of a first floor fire escape. Two schoolgirls got on the bus, each carrying a load of books. They were playing Geography and arguing about the spelling of Xochimilco. One said it began with a C. The other said it started with an S. The bus started and the doors closed.

"You get off soon?" the senora asked Dave.

"Yes. Next stop."

"New York," she sighed. "In Mallorca, strangers meet, they are friends for a much longer journey."

"Your home is in Mallorca?"

"Ah, yes. I will go back there soon. Perhaps next year."

"Will you come back?"

The senora looked at him and smiled. Dave blushed and apologized with his eyes.

"The young," she said. "Life is good when you are young. Yes?"

Dave nodded.

"When you are young, you have the capacity . . . to enjoy. To suffer. When you are old, it is enough to ride on a bus or feed chickens on a farm."

Looking out the window, Dave realized he was almost at his stop.

"My son is in Mallorca," the old lady went on. "I have not seen his grave for many years. The morning he was shot, I was picking flowers in my garden." She looked around as if they were suddenly surrounded. "Something stopped me. A pain. In the heart." She thrust her fist to her bosom and clutched at her shawl. "I knew. That second. He was never coming home again."

She looked at Dave and released her hands. The bus slowed down to clear a double-parked car.

"You will come visit me in Mallorca."

"I have a wife."

"Ah. That is good. You will bring her, too." She reached into her pocketbook and took out a card. "Here. Promise me you will not lose it."

Dave took it from her and read it.

MONTSERRAT COMELLAS

"Montserrat?"

"Yes. A name you cannot forget even if you wanted to. On the outside of Barcelona, there is a monastery. A mountain. Also Montserrat."

Dave smiled, put the card in his pocket. He had been to Montserrat and had stood at the top.

"I am a very old woman. You must not keep me waiting too long."

"If my wife and I are ever in Europe, we'll be honored . . ."

"You are gentle," she said. "You are good." The bus pulled up to the curb. Dave thought of riding on, but it was already too late.

"I must go."

He rose from his seat and the senora clasped his hand.

"Wait," she said. A man swung underneath Dave's arm and into his seat. "You have made me feel . . . *mama; abuela, grandmama; novia, virgen, y Dios.*"

The man shot a glance at the senora and then up at Dave. Starving into their expectant faces, Dave felt as if he had just missed a cue. He tried to smile, but his mouth had gone dry. Escaping the senora's eyes, he turned and pushed his way to the doors. The bus released him when he remembered to step down.

Walking out of the pawnshop, Dave breathed deeply, and felt in his pocket again to make sure he had the earrings. Next to the shop, there was a church, with a large, colored sign tacked over the doorway.

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Dave laughed and took another deep breath. At the corner, he realized the uptown subway was in the opposite direction. He looked up. It was getting darker and there was one cloud. A great, crucified bird holding up the sky. There was something else, he thought. Something he had to buy. Still walking in the opposite direction, he decided he would catch the subway home at the next stop, a couple of blocks away. Across the street, he saw a candy store. He waited for the light and then crossed over.

"You got jellybeans?"

"Easter's all over, mister. Sure I can't sell you chicken feed?"

"Sorry. My wife likes jellybeans."

Two blocks down he stopped at a florist and bought a bunch of violets. Irresistible and only sixty-five cents.

"For me?"

A boy with a striped polo shirt threw himself in front of Dave and gave him a mock curtsy. Another boy jumped from behind and grabbed for the violets. Dave raised his hand at them, and they scattered down the street, laughing and hooting. He walked quickly to the subway, one block away.

On the corner, there was a book and record shop. That's it, he remembered. The book on Matisse. He had promised it to Ellie for their last anniversary. Inside, the store looked deserted. The muffled sound of a symphony escaped through a closed listening-booth. A jaundiced, flaccid salesman appeared from nowhere. He wore a tight Ivy-league suit and spoke in a pseudo-British accent.

"Yes. May I help you?"

"Yes. I'm looking for a certain book on Matisse. I'm not sure of the name." The violets suddenly made him feel ridiculous.

"Our art books are against the wall." The salesman extended his hand.

"Thank you. I'll just browse, if you don't mind."

"Certainly."

The music stopped. A middle-aged woman with a crop of bed-spring curls at the top of her head, came out of the booth and slammed the door.

"How do you expect me to listen to a record on a phonograph like that?"

tristamba

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"The phonograph is in perfect condition, madam."

"Are you contradicting me?"

"Of course not. I'll see what I can do about it."

The salesman walked to the back and disappeared inside the booth.

"I should have known better than to come here," the woman stage-whispered to Dave. "That fairy always gives me a hard time."

Dave turned his back and browsed through the books.

"You. Young man. Maybe you can help me."

Dave faced her. "Sorry. I'm not a salesman."

"Of course you're not. Don't you think I can see that? Who the flowers for? Your girl?"

"My wife."

"Good for you."

Dave walked away, pretending to browse through another collection.

"Now you're a young man I can trust." She followed him down the aisle. "It's my niece's birthday, see. And she's got very peculiar taste. You know, the kind that goes to Bennington, signs petitions against bombs. Ever since she was little, her mother, my sister, let her walk all over the furniture. If she was my kid, I would have known what to do with her. Anyhow, I'd get her poetry, but she writes her own. So that leaves either a record or a play. Plain books she's not interested in. What do you suggest?"

"The record you were playing sounded all right."

"Yeah, but for her it's not modern enough. Me, I go for Mozart. He's one of the few around you can listen to and still think of something else."

She opened her pocketbook and took out her compact.

"Look at me. I'm a mess." She put her powder on as if she was erasing a blackboard.

"How's this?" Dave asked. He put the violets on the record counter and showed her a Bartok concerto.

"If it's all right with you, it's all right with me."

The salesman came out of the booth.

"I think you'll find everything in order now."

"Thank you. I'll listen to this one next." She handed him the



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... Ralph Gleason

BRILLIANCE

... Alfred Frankenstein

Four good reasons why more and more
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Bartok and he went back inside. The music started. A spiraling vibration.

"Sounds just like my niece."

The salesman came out and the woman smiled at Dave. She went into the booth and closed the door. The salesman shook his head and heaved a sigh.

"Excuse me," he said to Dave, and disappeared in the back.

Dave reached for the violets and stopped short. The woman's open pocketbook lay alongside them. A five-dollar bill stuck out of the change compartment. Dave pulled his hand back and looked around. There was no one in sight, and no sound, except for the Bartok spinning in his head. If it's all right with you, it's all right with me. He reached into the bag and snatched out the bill. His legs began to shake and his heart accompanied the record. He put the money in his pocket and picked up a book. The salesman crept up behind him.

"Find what you were looking for?"

Dave jumped and turned around.

"Anything wrong?" the salesman inquired.

"Oh, no. Still looking. Okay?"

"Of course. Take all the time you need. We're open until 7."

The woman came out of the booth.

"You can turn it off. I'll take it." She smiled witheringly at the salesman and endearingly at Dave. "I can't thank you enough."

"Not at all. I hope your niece enjoys it."

"If she doesn't, she can give it back. I'll buy her toilet water instead."

The woman went to her bag and started scrounging for her money. Dave walked to the bargain table near the exit and skimmed the titles.

"My god! My money!"

"What's wrong?"

"I had a five-dollar bill. Now I don't."

The salesman scurried down the aisle.

"Something the matter?"

"I'm so embarrassed. This has never happened to me before. You know," she said to the salesman. "I'm a steady customer here. I buy books like water." She ran through her bag again.

"May I?" Dave asked.

"Of course."

Dave turned the bag upside down and scooped it out until it was empty.

"Matches I got plenty. Money I lose."

Dave took the five dollars out of his pocket.

"Here."

The woman looked at him, puzzled.

"Let me pay for the record."

The woman gasped. The salesman smacked his lips.

"I insist."

"You crazy?"

"It was my selection. That makes it my responsibility." He smiled at her as if it was the most logical offer in the world.

"But I couldn't." She looked to the salesman for help.

"Could I?"

"I don't see why not." The salesman shrugged. "It's up to the gentleman?"

The gentleman smiled again. The woman hardly breathed.

"Well . . . I'll send you a check for it as soon as I get home."



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"No soap."

"Just give me your name."

"Not on your life."

"But this is the most incredible thing that's ever happened to me. Nobody'll believe it."

"Then don't tell anybody." He gave the salesman the bill and the salesman went to the cash register.

"The least you could do is give him a break," the woman said to the salesman.

"Certainly. I mean . . . I'm not the boss. I'll do my best." He rang up the sale. \$2.50.

"It's a \$4.98 record," he announced, giving Dave his change.

"Thank you," Dave said. He bowed his head to the woman, picked up the violets, and walked out the door.

When Dave got home, Ellie was in the living room, reading. She looked up, but not *at* him. Dave walked over to her and put the earrings down on the coffee table. She glanced at them and went on reading.

"Ellie."

"Yes?" she said quietly, not looking up.

"I took something today."

"Yes, Dave. I know. If you don't mind, I don't think I'm ready to talk about it yet."

"You don't understand."

"I do, Dave. Believe me. I do."

"No. I . . ."

Ellie looked up. Something in his voice.

"Dave. What is it?"

"I . . ."

"What's the matter?"

"I took something else."

"What do you mean?"

"I've been taking things ever since California. The first time was in the movies. Today it was in a book store."

"Dave. Sit down. Go slowly. I can't keep up with you."

"I'm sorry, darling. I didn't want to take your earrings. We needed the money. At least, I . . ."

"Forget about the earrings. What happened in the book store?"

"I stole \$5.00."

"Did anybody see you?"

"No. I gave it back. I made believe it was my own money and I bought the woman a present. She was a terrible woman and I made her like me. The salesman gave me a break. He charged me two-fifty for a five-dollar record. Two dollars are in a trash can in the BMT. I spent the change on candy bars and threw them away, too."

"My God. My darling. Why didn't you tell me?"

"I bought you violets and gave them to a little girl."

"Shh. Dave. You mustn't talk."

"There was an old lady on the bus. A Spanish lady. With the name of a mountain. She said the most amazing thing to me. She said: You make me feel like——"

Ellie got up and cupped her palm over his mouth. Dave grasped her hand and kissed her fingertips. She took him in her arms and he cried on her breast.

"Don't, Dave. Don't. You're home now and safe."

Dave pulled away. Ellie reached back for the table.

"No!" he yelled. His eyes were wild and he was no longer crying. "*Don't you dare forgive me.*"

Ellie stepped back as if she had been struck.

"Dave . . ."

"Once. Just once. There's got to be punishment."

"Dave. Stop it."

"*Just once . . .*"

"Dave . . ."

"Why do you always have to be so available?"

She slapped his face and ran into the bedroom. The door slammed shut and Dave fell to the sofa. Then he got up and walked to the fireplace. There he was. At twelve. Or thirteen. Blond and in his bones. On a dumb, bored horse.

Where do we go from here, pal?

He struck the fireplace with his fist and the picture fell to the floor. Looking down, he cried out in pain. He was bleeding on his own face.

CONTACT,

Driving back across country I was thinking of your CRIMINAL MAN issue, and it occurred to me what it is we are all guilty of—in the sense of Ahab's prancing around the deck on his ivory leg, demanding: "Why was my leg bitten off?" And of Jake Barnes' sitting at the bullfight, being very calm about his own wound. These as we say in the profession, are universal symbols; they whisper about the common wound. It occurred to me that the crime we are all guilty of is *speeding*. Anybody who has life in him speeds. "Is it me they're after? What have I done?" The answer is: you are speeding. And while you are speeding you are a free oblivious individual. It's only when you are caught that you become "The Criminal Man." The wound begins to hurt. And you are raised to a new level by catastrophe.

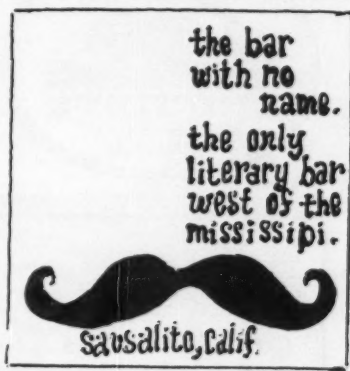
We spend most of our time trying to get around misfortune. We are horrified if we have to lose a tooth. The dentist says:

"It'll have to come out."

But we are impatient:

"Can't you fill it?"

"I've already filled it."



Baby Face Nelson

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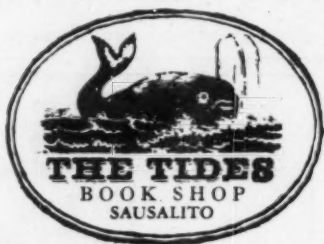
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"Can't you fill it some more?"

"It's FULL!"

The trouble is that we usually manage to dodge unpleasantness, and we stay small.

Like Thoreau, I have now spent my night in jail. But, again like Thoreau, I was bonded out next morning. Jail isn't for people with money. This is the chief thing I learned. If you've money you simply pay the fine. Jails all over the country are full of poor people who didn't have \$100 in the bank at the time. Money is a great nebulizer: "Fast Relief of Stuffy Nose" (adv.). We want relief and we want it fast. The human race seems to spend most of its time arranging to avoid suffering; yet only the crestfallen, the unfortunate man, knows the truth (truth — the only absolute value).

One cannot, as a sane human being, deliberately court disaster; but *one has to speed*; and with luck one can get caught. Privileged, the criminal man. Yet no snob. The ultimate penalty, the final stuffy nose, is universal and common. Everyone has a chance at the truth.

Faternally,

RALPH MAUD

Audit, Univ. of Buffalo

NO, BUT I SAW THE MOVIE??

CONTACT EDITIONS announces the Spring, 1961, publication of a brilliant first novel which we feel sure will *never* be made into a movie.

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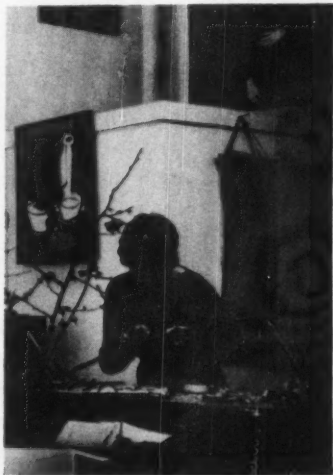
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CRIMINAL MAN?

Let me play with a hypothesis.

Like this:

The criminal man is any man who believes the ads.

I don't mean the ads that say top-grain cowhide, \$16.95.

I mean the ads that work on your view of yourself and the world:

The ads that say you old smoothie, you.

The ads that say look, you're an executive.

The ads that say it's so American to want something better.

Because he believes the ads he thinks:

- That human personality is the clothes you wear, the gadgets you own, the car you drive.
- That human desires exist to be gratified as soon and as lavishly as possible. Why do without? Why wait?
- That everyone is looking at his possessions as eagerly and anxiously as he is looking at theirs.
- That it isn't your work that counts, it's how much you make.
- Correction: It isn't how much you make that counts, but how much credit you can get.
- That moonlighting in order to make more money to pay for a new car and wall-to-wall carpeting and a power-mower is raising the family standard of living, and therefore doing one's duty as a parent.

Maybe this guy is not the criminal man.

Maybe he is just the criminal man's father.



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